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CRITICISM ON THE

# Theological Idea of Deity:

CONTRASTING THE VIEWS ENTERTAINED OF A  
SUPREME BEING BY THE ANCIENT GRECIAN  
SAGES, WITH THOSE OF MOSES AND  
THE HEBREW WRITERS ;

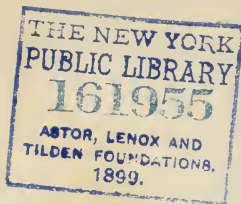
AND BLENDING ANCIENT JUDAISM, PAGANISM,  
AND CHRISTIANITY INTO A COMMON ORIGINAL.

BY M. B. CRAVEN.

— Canst thou by searching find out God ? *Job* 11 : 7. —

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## CONTENTS :

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### CHAPTER I.

The Hebrew conception of a Divine Being contrasted with that of the Grecian Sages, with Quotations from and Criticisms on various Theologians, ancient and modern.

### CHAPTER II.

Same subject continued, in connection with the doctrine of Immortality being embraced by Pagan nations before it was by the Jews.

### CHAPTER III.

Changeability and inconsistency of the Hebrew idea of God—Contradictory statements of different Biblical writers in regard to seeing God, etc.

### CHAPTER IV.

Angelic communications with the Hebrews—Jewish idea of the Spirit of the Lord—View of Diety in connection with the history of Jephthah, etc.

### CHAPTER V.

The Hindoo faculty—Christian Missions—Images not supposed by Pagans to be deities—Christian worship contrasted with Paganism—Various opinions of God—The worship of a Supreme Being prevalent among all the Polytheistic nations of antiquity, etc.

### CHAPTER VI.

The Indian belief in God more spiritual than the Hebrew—Hebrew custom of pronouncing curses—Irrelevant ideas of Deity entertained by the Prophets—Platonic philosophy contrasted with Pauline Christianity and Judaism—Trinity, of Pagan origin, etc.

## CHAPTER VII.

The curse of Balaam—Ancient Sacrificing—Micaiah and the Prophets of Baal—Gideon's Judgeship—Israel's perverseness—The Lord's anger with them—Character of Balaam reviewed by various Theologians, etc.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Slaughter of the Midianites—God's friendly feeling for the Moabites—Israelites compared with Heathens in dedicating spoils to Deity—Plundering by the Israelites consistent with their ideas of God—Israelites compared with Mormons, etc.

## CHAPTER IX.

Judaism and Paganism blended together in the narrative of Jonah—Repentance changed from God to man, etc.

## CHAPTER X.

The Lord and Satan placed on a social equality in the book of Job—Curse of the original Serpent in the person of Satan.—Views concerning Job, and the book that bears his name, by various Theologians.

## CHAPTER XI.

Satan, and his supposed influence Theologically the work of God—origin of evil—Moral depravity of the human race, and God's curse the result of Adam's transgression, with quotations from and criticisms on various Theologians.

## CHAPTER XII.

Same subject continued—Inference that the Bible furnishes no reliable evidence that the moral affairs of the world are controlled by a Being of Almighty power and Infinite goodness—Incomprehensibility of God, etc.

## CHAPTER XIII.

View of the Devil, as incorporated into the works of Divinity—Veracity of the Serpent vindicated—Tree of Life—Satan a myth, etc.

## NOTICE TO THE READER.

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WHEN the propriety of having this Essay published separately was suggested, we revised it and appended a Chapter to the closing part, where some observations are made in regard to that reputed foe of the human race, theologically known as the *Devil*. We hope to be excused for the slight manner in which his Satanic Majesty is treated and blended into the history, on the ground that we lack faith in the moral utility of such a character in the works of Divinity.

We would state, that on issuing the first part of the "Triumph of Criticism," a city Editor in criticising it, asserted in his paper that if the writer consulted his own interest, the whole work would not be published on account of its unsaleable nature. Though the admonition was no doubt as pious as it was judicious in a pecuniary sense, the result has now induced us to offer the *second* part of it for the criticism or censure of a religiously biased community; and in which we opine some repair is made for that *deficiency of critical*, which another Editor, in his contumelious remarks called attention to—though graciously conceding to us *a broad field of general reading* in its composition.

The most efficient weapon with which we were assailed by those editors of the antique order—who favored us with a passing notice, was the fact of our confession that orthodox publishers declined to engage in the work. This acknowledgment on our part was made chiefly for the purpose of exhibiting a continuation of that religious prejudice with which pioneers in reform have had in all ages to contend.

The trifold idea of Deity is not especially criticised, as that is made a theme of consideration in a subsequent part, under the head of *Trinity*. Neither is the subject of “Modern Spiritualism”—to which we devoted a portion of the *Prolegomena*, again made a topic of special notice until the 12th, and concluding part, where it is introduced and dwelt upon briefly, for the purpose of showing that communications now in process with the inhabitants of the supramundane spheres, is the prophesied coming of Christ *in the clouds of heaven*—and to orthodoxy—as predicted—*like a thief in the night*; but whose advent, Dr. Seiss and his *hundred other authors*, are now anticipating by an open manifestation from heaven, in a supernatural manner at variance with the established order of Nature. But the idea of his coming in this unlooked for and unostentatious manner, is of course as repugnant to their feelings, and is as contemptuously repudiated by them, as his first coming was by ancient orthodox Judaism as their predicted *Messiah*, in the person of a wandering and despised Nazarene.

Christendom, in a theological point of view, now



occupies a position in the world analagous to that of Judaism in the days of Christ. The ecclesiastical state of the Jews was then in a more flourishing condition than it had been since the days of Solomon; and they were living in expectation of an earthly Prince, of the lineage of David, to establish their worldly pre-eminence over all others. But they failed to realize their earthly anticipations, and their calculations were signally defeated by an obscure Galilean reformer, who was substituted by his followers for the expected temporal deliverer. He discarded worldly greatness, and by a life of humility and humane teaching, gave religion a more internal and spiritual application than had been taught or conceived by their Lawgiver, whose religious teachings were limited in their consequences to worldly prosperity.

Nominal Christianity now occupies a higher position in the estimation of the world than it has at any period in its former history, and the condition and prospect of the Church is considered by its votaries to be unprecedently prosperous. The ambassadors of the *Cross* are said to be converting the Heathen with a success only equalled by that of the Jews in proselyting the Gentiles at the coming of Christ, and they are now looking for his second advent in power and majesty from heaven to crown their religious anticipations and confirm the alleged prophecies of former ages. But unfortunately for their expectations, their hopes—like that of the ancient Jews, are apparently to be thwarted by an

obscure, and to them unsatisfactory and pernicious spiritual development, which presents a different aspect to that of the old religious system, and plants theology on a new basis.

Christ said that he "came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil:" when, at the same time, his teaching and the subsequent preaching of his followers, abrogated those rites and ceremonies in connection with the Law, whereby its devotees identified themselves as the only chosen people of God, and opened a door of acceptance to the Gentile world. Thus *Spiritualism* through modern development, annuls the exclusive right claimed by Christians to salvation, and, devoid of sectarian fanaticism, or mythotragical romance, gives conclusive evidence that the whole race of God's offspring occupy the same broad and generous platform in his care and estimation.

Though Christianity is encumbered with the bigotry and superstition entailed to it by the ancient Jews and Therapeuts of Egypt, yet, believing the morality of its teachings—though borrowed from the Pagan nations of antiquity—to constitute the highest type of civilization, and its ethical precepts better adapted to the necessities and moral government of mankind than that of any other system,—the writer of this work comes not to destroy, but to assist in fulfilling it on the same principle that Christ fulfilled the Jewish law, and demonstrate the *blood* of Calvary and *smoke* of Sinai to be equally inadequate to satisfy the religious feeling of the age.

# TRIUMPH OF CRITICISM.

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## PART SECOND.

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### THEOLOGICAL VIEW OF DEITY.

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The Hebrew conception of a Divine Being contrasted with that of the Grecian Sages. Quotations from and Criticisms on Moses—Orpheus—Maimonides—Paley—Clarke—Mansel—Simonides—David—Hæsioid—Pythagoras—Chalmers—Dick—Reid—Locke—Brisbane—Paul—Aratus—Le Clerc—Socrates—Xenophon—Dwight—Kitto—Jenyns—Jahn—Varro—Beecher—Burder, and others.

THE reader is not to suppose that it is our object to make an assault on the attributes of Deity, or advance theory derogatory to the immutable laws of Nature. Our design in treating the subject—as before stated, is merely to show that the narrow and

selfish idea of what is adored as *God*—and his general character as conceived and portrayed by the Biblical authors, is becoming outgrown by the human mind in the present generous and scientific age, and only adapted to the religious intuitions of those periods that produced them.

Theologians assume that in consequence of human reason being unable to attain to any certain knowledge of the will, law, and attributes of the Supreme Being, a divine revelation was necessary, and that such a revelation the Jews and Christians only have ever possessed. However superior the Jewish and Christian idea of God, in connection with morality may have been in ethical utility to that of other nations, and however well adapted the Biblical view of the nature and qualities of Deity may have been to the *inspired* feeling of its authors,—it is our present purpose to demonstrate their reputed revelation of God, and his position in relation to his creatures, to be incongruous with the light and reason that humanity has inherited from Nature, that the views therein conveyed are only presumed by the writers, and that they in reality were as ignorant of the first Great Cause as the Pagan seers and sages, who claimed nothing more than the light of Nature in excogitating their more relevant ideas in regard to Deity and his so called attributes.

Mythology proves that Moses in declaring the supremacy of one God, did not differ thereby from the Pagan or Gentile nations. Orpheus—who was

to the ancient Greeks what Moses was to the Jews, said, "There is a Being incomprehensible, the most ancient, the most exalted of all, the Creator of all things. This sublime Being is life, is light, is wisdom," &c. Sophocles, also says, "There is in truth only one God, who made the heaven and earth, the sea, the air," &c. Parmenides, Melissus, Euclid, and Xenophanes, together with Stoic, philosophers, also entertained similar views concerning the existence of one Supreme intelligence as the Creator of all things. But while the Eleusinian mysteries were popular in Egypt and Greece, this doctrine was secretly confined to the priests and learned sages; and to Moses belongs the credit, (if credit it be,) of publicly divulging and rudely endeavoring to coerce that belief and form of worship among those ignorant people for whom he legislated.

Though he portrays God as a corporeal being of bodily parts, and subject to human passions, yet Rabbi Maimonides, in the *Articles* of the Jewish Creed—as drawn up by him,—at variance with such sensuous conceptions, represents God to be incorporeal, without bodily parts or qualities, constituting the beginning and end of all things. Such a comprehensive idea we might suppose would necessarily include *all things* in the intermediate time: which is tantamount to the whole body of Nature, constituting God. This view is apparently confirmed by the apostle Paul, when he says, "In God we live, and move, and have our being." And Dr.

Dwight, says, "that the only way in which the existence of things universally prove the existence of God, is by supposing that God is demonstrated in things *universally*."

Our divines contend that by discarding belief in such a personal God as was conceived by Moses, we destroy the foundation for religion; when in reality the rejection of his sentiment would only strike at the root of such a religion as he inculcated, which was based on fear, and only adapted to an age of tyranny and despotism,—soon to be prostrated by the march of humanity, and superceded by religion founded on and embodied in love. Fear of vengeance never was an auxiliary in the cause of love and virtue. Those inclined to be upright meet with no detriment to human welfare, by ignoring the assumed personalities ascribed to God by Moses. For in propagating his ideas of God, he assimilated the divine character with his own partial and vindictive nature. True godliness—which consists in charity and benevolence toward our fellow creatures—with gratitude to Divinity for the blessings of existence, was not in the least enhanced by his revelation; for he placed but little valuation on the lives of his own people, and much less on those of other nations. The intrinsic element of religion is manifestly a development of humanity, produced in natural accordance with the regular and established order of what in the present age of growing philanthropy, is supposed to constitute the Divine Principle.

In vindication of a personal God as worshiped by Christians in harmony with the Bible, Dr. Paley, whose writings in its defence stood conspicuous in a past century, says "that contrivance establishes the personality of God; and that the marks of design is conclusive that Design must have had a designer—that designer must have been a person—and that person God." If, as he maintains, God is a person, and in agreement with the Mosaic assumption assists in human destruction by fighting, we inquire whether he can be organized like a person and subject to all the feelings that characterize human nature? Whence came he? or how did he originate? Could he have been produced by an agency in the same manner that he is said to have formed us? It is as fallacious to suppose a person without an organization, as it is unreasonable to suppose design without a designer. And design and organization are equally dependent on antecedent causes.

Dr. S. Clarke, whose theological genius stood unsurpassed in his day, on the "Being and Attributes of God," says, in answer to Hobbs, Spinoza, and others, "Now to be *self existent*, is not, to be *produced by itself*; for that is an express contradiction. But it is, I say, to *exist* by an absolute necessity originally in the nature of the thing itself." If it is an *express contradiction* for a self existent being to have been produced by itself, it is equally illogical to suppose that a being that held its existence through any other cause, should be the Creator of



all things. To merely assert that he exists through "absolute necessity according to the nature of the thing," without an original cause, is no stronger argument in defence of his personal existence, than that the disordered state of the moral world prove the absolute necessity of a Devil. And the modern conception that God is an incorporeal essence, utterly precludes the possibility of his being a representative of a material creature, and renders the theological idea of Deity as founded upon Mosaic revelation, incompatible with the impressions of the present more mature state of the human mind.

Yet the Rev. H. L. Mansel, on *Miracles*, says, "Paley's criticism is, after all the correct one; once believe there is a God, and miracles are not incredible; for an impersonal God is no God at all." But we can with equal plausibility argue that a being who would deviate from his regular mode of procedure and resort to such eccentric and thaumaturgical exploits as performing *miracles* for the purpose of effecting what his natural and established system was ineffectual in accomplishing, can not, agreeable with the intellect and reason that marks the present day, be consistently termed *Deity*.

It is said the Pagan philosopher Simonides, on being asked the question, What is God? required a day to think on it. When the day was spent, he asked for another; and still more time for consideration. Finally, when asked a reason for his delay in giving an answer, he replied that the longer he



meditated on the subject, the more obscure it became to him. And thus with all the presumed light that Christians claim to possess concerning a Divine Being through the revelation of the Bible,—they would, with serious contemplation, find themselves involved in as much obscurity in regard to what *God* is, as the Grecian sage; and more influenced by that humble spirit that prompted Socrates to say on the subject that he only knew that he knew nothing.

Anaxagoras calls the Deity an Infinite Mind. Pythagoras defines him to be a Mind diffused through all parts of the world, and permeating all Nature. Salustius says he is not to be contained or comprehended in place. Thus the Gentile philosophers ascribe *omnipresence* to God—whereas Moses and Hebrew writers frequently assign him some locality for his residence; as shown by the repeated use of such language as “going from the presence of the Lord.” Though in fact, according to the record, he does not seem to have had any permanent or special dwelling place before the time of Solomon, for that voluptuous monarch is said to have built a house for a settled abode for him to abide in forever, (1 Kings 8.13). The idea of his having no home of his own, and being found in heaven, in hell, and the uttermost parts of the sea, wrought so effectually on the sympathy of the psalmist, David, that he both *swore and vowed* unto the Lord, that he would neither give sleep to his eyes, nor slumber to his eyelids, until he had found out a place for the

Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob, (Ps. 139: 8, 9 and 132: 2-5). But his oath and vow went for naught, as the Lord preferred Solomon for his builder; who, with the help of a Tyrian architect and Pagan workmen, completed a house for him, (2. Chron. 2: 13-18). When it was finished, the Lord expressed his approbation of it by saying, "mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually." As the house was subsequently destroyed by a more advanced and powerful Eastern nation, he could not have realized it to be a perpetual dwelling place in agreement with his anticipations. But unfortunately for the harmony of opinion among Biblical authors in respect to God's dwelling place, Solomon, (1 Kings 8: 12), states that he dwells in *thick darkness*; whereas, according to Paul, he dwells in *light* that no man can approach unto, (1 Tim. 6:16).

An acquaintance with the Pagan mode of worship anterior to the time of Solomon, furnishes ample evidence that this building a house for the Lord to dwell in, as conceived by David, when his success in aggressive wars had brought his dominion to a rivalry with other powerful and opulent potentates, was in imitation of the Egyptians, Babylonians, and other Pagan nations, who had, long before his time erected costly temples which were dedicated to divine worship, as the dwelling places of their respective Gods.

The Greek poet Hesiod—who was cotemporary with Elijah, ascribes unlimited knowledge and universal wisdom to God. Thales, on being asked

whether a man in doing evil could be concealed from God? answered no, nor in evil thinking either. Pindar says, if a man hopes any thing will be concealed from God, he is deceived. Thus the Grecian sages likewise ascribe *omniscence* to God,—when, according to the Hebrew conception of his attributes—as conveyed through *divine revelation*, he was sometimes ignorant of worldly transactions, and disposed to be incredulous in regard to believing reports that came to him concerning the conduct of people; which necessitated him to leave a certain place and go to another, for the purpose of witnessing the moral state of affairs for his own satisfaction. As an instance, “And the Lord said because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not I will know, (Gen. 18: 20, 21).

Pythagoras—who taught in the time of the latter Hebrew prophets, when describing the attributes of Deity, says, “God is neither the object of carnality, or the subject of passion, but invisible and supremely intelligent. In his body he is like unto Light, and in his soul he resembles Truth. He is the universal spirit that pervades and diffuseth itself over all Nature. All things receive their life from him. There is but *One* only God! who is not as some are apt to suppose, seated above the world and beyond the orb of the universe; but being himself all in all, he sees all the things that fill his immensity;

the only Principle, the Light of heaven, the Father of all. He produces every thing; He orders and disposes every thing; He is the reason, the life, and motion of all things." Among his moral precepts were—"Admit not sleep to thine eyes, till thou hast thrice examined in thy soul the actions of the day. Ask thyself—What have I done? What ought I to have done? &c. Then after a holy life, when the body shall return to the elements, thou shalt become immortal and incorruptible, no longer liable to death." Sentiment commending such devotion to a virtuous life in view of immortality, so congenial to human nature, together with his sublime and generous ideas of God—so consistent with modern intuitions, are not to be found in the reputed divine revelation of Moses or the Prophets.

Dr. Chalmers when speaking of the disadvantage that the Pagans labored under in comparison with those whom he considered the recipients of a *revealed* knowledge of God, says, "They have few of the facts in theology, and these may be seen too through the hazy medium of a dull and imperfect evidence, or perhaps have only been shadowed out to them by the power of imagination. Their theology may have arisen no higher than the passing suggestion of a God—a mere surmise or rumination about an unseen Spirit, who, attending all their footsteps, was their guardian and their guide through the dangers of the pathless wilderness, who provides all the sustenance which this earth can supply, and hath lighted up the heavens in all their glory. . . .

These differences attest what man is, under the dark economy of Paganism; and so give token to what he would be under the bright economy of a full and finished revelation." But let us examine the moral and literary condition of man under what he calls the *dark economy of Paganism*, during the bright period of Grecian literature,—antecedent to the Christian dispensation, and see whether the history of his condition for more than a thousand years succeeding the inauguration of Christianity—which our author supposes to furnish *a full and finished revelation*, gives any evidence of its recipients having been in the least benefitted thereby. A mere glance at his moral record during the *dark ages* which followed the downfall of Pagan Rome, sufficiently illustrates the fact that there was no amelioration produced, either in his temporal or spiritual condition, but rather a retrogression into sensuality and barbarism, seems to have been the actual result. Dr. Dick, in narrating the cruel and bloody wars with which Europe and Asia were convulsed after the fall of Paganism, and the establishment of Christianity in Europe,—during the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries, says, "Almost the whole earth appeared to be little else than a great battle field, in which the human race seemed to be threatened with extermination."

Le Clere, in his "History of the Ancient Greek Religion,"—after quoting at considerable length from a hymn of Cleanthus, preserved by Stobaeus in vindication of the advanced state of ancient

Greek worship, says, "Never has any one spoken of the Divine Being with greater sublimity; and if we consider the testimony of Varro, of Aristotle, of the divine Plato, and those others which Cicero has preserved, we will cease to accuse, of intellectual darkness, a people not less enlightened than ourselves, and who do not yield to us in grandeur and elevation of sentiment." Prof. Robertson, on "God's Revelation from Heaven," says: "It is in vain that we ransack the world for probable evidences of God, and hypothesis of his existence." How, then, are we to suppose that those Gentile sages arrived at such exalted conceptions of Divinity in connection with immortality? In his remarks on the Grecian mind in the time of Paul in his first *Advent Lecture*, he says: "The Greek looked upon this world in its fallen state and pronounced it all *very good*. . . . Had you asked the Greek his highest wish, he would have replied. "This world if it could only last—I ask no more. Immortal youth and this bright existence." What Rev. D D., with health, friends, and the comforts of life around him, would be likely to ask any more, if he could only get that by praying for?

Chalmers, on "Natural Theology," when expatiating on Dr. S. Clarke's demonstration of the *Attributes of Deity*, says, "We give these merely as a specimen of a style of reasoning which we will not stop to appreciate—and instead of attempting any further to excogitate a Deity in this way; let us now search if there be any reflection of him



from the mirror of that universe which he has formed." By this we infer that the evidence which the Christian possesses of God's existence is obtained by excogitation resulting from a search after the "reflection of him from the mirror of the universe," while the Pagan idea of him is derived from what he designates as "surmisings and ruminations shadowed out to them by the power of imagination!" When commenting on Hume's objection to the *a posteriori* argument of Clarke, he says, "Now it appears to us that this argument of Hume has not been rightly met by any of his antagonists. Instead of resisting it they have retired from it—and, in fact, have done him the homage of conceding to him the principle on which it rests. They have suffered him to bear away one of the prime supports of Natural Theism; and to make up for their loss they have attempted to replace it with another support which I hold to be altogether precarious."

And Dr. Reid, when paraphrasing the famous *a priori* argument of Clarke, in regard to the existence of Deity as the creator of matter, says, "These are the speculations of men of superior genius—but whether they be solid as they are sublime, or whether they be the wanderings of the imagination into a region beyond the limits of human understanding, I am unable to determine." Which testimony convinces us, that if, as Prof. Romaine says, "The Hottentots know as much about God as the Ancient Greeks and Romans did;" the evidence is satisfactory that those para-

gons of intelligence—the Jews and Christians, know nothing more about the Supreme Being than the American Indians did at the time of their discovery, when they adored him as the *Great Spirit*. The Jewish and Christian revelation of Deity, amounts at best, to nothing more than what the metaphysical philosopher Locke, calls *traditional revelation*, or revelation as we have it, in such a manner as to convey the idea that we have no evidence of the scripture being the word of God, but from a succession of witnesses having told us so.

The Rev. W. H. Brisbane, in the *Introduction* to his “Defence of the Bible against the Objections of Infidelity”—when giving his views in regard to the necessity of such a revelation as is given in the Bible, to satisfy the demand of man’s instinct, says, that “the very idea of God is foreign to him in his original state.” Instead of the idea of God being *foreign* to man in his original state,—when we compare the superior idea of him as conceived and taught by the Grecian philosophers without the aid of the Bible, with the narrow and personal views adopted by the Hebrew writers, as derived from reputed divine revelation, the sophistry of such argument becomes apparent to every unprejudiced and intelligent mind. He further says, “Education supposes civilization, civilization supposes religion, and religion supposes some knowledge of God.” Thus agreeable with his mode of reasoning, we perceive that the Greek poets—who were the most educated and polished people in the world



before the time of Christ, had advanced to a higher degree of religious literature and civilization without the revelation given in the Bible, than the Jews had attained with it. This fact is substantially confirmed by the Apostle Paul when he says, "The Greeks seek after wisdom ;"—in consequence of which he confessed that his preaching Christ to them as a *crucified* God, was nothing but foolishness, and merely a stumbling-block to the Jews, who required only a *sign*—regardless of wisdom, (1 Cor. 1 : 22, 23)

This view is further sustained by him in his preaching at Athens : for though he found the city wholly given up to what is termed *idolatry*, he declared no other God to them than the one they worshipped. Paul's acquiescence in Grecian theosophy is apparently admitted by Dr. Davidson, who in his *Sacred Hermeneutics*, says that Paul has quoted from Menander, Epimenides, and Aratus. On this occasion (*Acts* 17,) he expressed his admiration of the divine sentiment in their conceptions of God, by quoting literature verbatim, from Aratus—a statesman and poet who flourished 300 years previous. A stanza translated from the *Phenomena*—a poem of Aratus, which meets with Paul's approbation in relation to God, runs thus :—

"Jove's presence fills all space, upholds this ball,  
All need his aid, his power sustains us all,  
For we his offspring are ; and he in love  
Points out to man his labor from above."

By this we discover that those ancient Greeks—in

conceiving the earth to be globular, were in advance of the Jews and Christians in science as well as religion ; and that Paul and the *idolatrous* Athenians were worshippers of the same *unknown* God. But Paul, like conceited nominal Christians of the present day, enthusiastically considered himself more enlightened on the subject of Divinity than they, and in his religious zeal undertook to officiate as a missionary among them by attempting to declare God more perfectly. Though J. Wesley says that Paul was the greatest reasoner we have had except Jesus Christ, yet he made no display of his ratiocination to the Athenians, by giving any *reason* why his ideas of God were superior or more enlightened than theirs ; but was well aware of the futility of attempting to prove the truth or superiority of his religious sentiment by performing what was termed *miracles*. Bengel, in his "Gnomon of the New Testament," (vol.3) says, "There were fools among the Greeks, and also wise men even among the barbarians." If there were fools among the Greeks, as he asserts, the conclusion is that it was Paul's scheme to catch them with his craftiness and guile, as he declared he had done the Corinthians, (2 Cor. 12: 16).

Professor Hort, in his "Mythology of the Ancients," says: "The term *idolatry* is derived from two Greek words which signify worship and representation." As the Hebrew writers in their worship of Jehovah, *represent* him as being possessed with hands, arms, and eyes, together with such corporeal

senses and passions as characterize human beings,—the inference is, that one system is about as idolatrous as the other—though the Jewish *representation* was only verbal. Le Clerc says, “Shall the Greeks be accused of idolatry because they embraced the doctrine of Polytheism? No, for we are certain that in reality they adored but one God. They represented him just as he has been conceived by the most sacred of all religions, and they had the sublimest ideas of his being and essence. From them are borrowed the images by which he is described with us. All the proof of his existence, drawn from the law of nature, from the moral principle, from the unanimous consent of nations, and from the contemplation of the universe, are to be found in their writings. Their Poets, their Orators, and their Philosophers, have all agreed in admitting the existence of one Supreme Deity, and some of them represent him in language truly eloquent.”

Socrates—styled by Bishop Warburton, the god-like, and admitted by Chateaubriand to have been the first martyr to the cause of God and morality; lived at Athens, and taught his religious sentiment,—in which Dr. Haven, says, lay the foundation of scientific ethics, 400 years before Paul visited the place as a herald of the doctrine of Christ. An idea of his conception of God is given by an address to one of his disciples when he said. “If the mind inhabiting your body can dispose and govern it with ease, ought you not to conclude that the universal

Mind can with equal ease govern and actuate universal nature." According to his disciple Xenophon, a divine spirit constantly attended him, under whose influence he never expressly commanded what he was indisposed to do. He insisted on the perfect goodness and wisdom of God, and the constant superintendence of his providence over the affairs of men. And Dr. Dwight on the "Mercy of God," (Vol. 1, of his sermons), says, that "Socrates expressed the real ultimate of reason on the subject of *mercy*, when he doubted whether it were possible for God to forgive sin." Which shows that the Socratic idea of God, so far as *reason* in relation to forgiveness is concerned, was in harmony with the views of that famous theologian.

Under the teachings of such men as Socrates, the Greeks never became fanatical in their religion like the Jews. This fact is admitted by Dr. Kitto in his remarks on Paul's preaching at Athens, when he says, "Though they did not persecute him as the Jews had done, yet his preaching Jesus was considered by the Epicurian and Stoic philosophers, as a fabulous legend." In taking him to the Areopagus, that he might give a full account of his doctrine before those judges—whose office it was to decide in religious as well as civil and judicial matters, they displayed their wisdom and discretion in the concerns of practical worship, by manifesting no bigotry, and evincing a disposition to tolerate freedom of religious sentiment, which the Jews opposed, by persecuting him for disseminating hereti-

cal sentiment which conflicted with what they revered as *divine* revelation.

In contrasting the idea entertained of a Supreme Being by the Greek reformer Socrates, with that of the Hebrew reformer Moses, we find that the former conceived highly exalted and sublime views of God in his superintending providence in the affairs of men; while the latter supposed that he only gave attention to one tribe or nation of his offspring, and was not only subject to human passions and fluctuations, but was a personal character of a furious and irritable disposition, highly prepossessed in favor of war, plundering, and extermination. In the last intercourse of Socrates with his friends, he said, "As the soul is immortal, it has no other means of being freed from its evils, nor any safety for it, but in becoming good and wise; for it carries nothing with it, but its good, or bad deeds, its virtues and vices, which are commonly the consequences of the education it has received. . . I receive confidence from the belief that man continues to exist after death; and that the condition of good men will then be much better than that of the bad." Such glorious confidence in a future life when about to depart from this, was never so beautifully expressed by any of the Hebrew Psalmists, Prophets, or Priests. Socrates, like Jesus after him, wrote nothing, but fell a sacrifice to his contempt for what is called *idolatry*. And ignorant submission to tyranny and despotism, in a more primitive and less intellectually developed age, is

undoubtedly all that saved that indefatigable and cruel reformer Moses from sharing the same fate.

Soame Jenyns, on the "Internal Evidence of Religion," in his observations concerning the Grecian sages tracing the being and principle attributes of God to the works of creation, says, "They occasionally flung out many elegant encomiums on the native beauty and excellence of virtue; but ~~they~~ founded it not on the command of God, nor connected it with a holy life, nor hung out the happiness of heaven as its reward, or its object. They sometimes talked of virtue carrying men to heaven and placing them among the Gods":&c. Did Moses ever *hang out* the happiness of heaven as the reward or object of a virtuous life? or even talk of virtue carrying men there as the Heathen poets did? Yet it is alleged on *divine* authority, that he received his moral code direct from God.

Other English divines have endeavored to show that some of the Grecian philosophers and poets gave the place of Deity to a Principle, which they termed the *Nature of Things*; considering the minds of men to be particles separate from the Soul of the universe, and that at the dissolution of the body, these particles again sought and were reunited to the same source from which they proceeded. Even this idea contains a much more sublime and supernal view of man's eternal destiny, in connection with the works of God than was taught by Moses, who does not in the whole course of his religious jurisprudence, throw out a hint or intima-



tion that he believed in any kind of a hereafter ; though in his reputed vicarious intercourse with Jehovah, he possessed such transcendent facilities for obtaining information on that interesting and all important subject. This fact proves that his ideas of God in connection with immortality are inadequate to meet the demands of a more spiritualistic and mature age of the world.

Dr. Jahn, in his "Biblical Archeology," when advocating the superiority of the biblical idea of God over that of the Grecian sages, says, "The latter appear to have had no true notion of God as the ruler and judge of men, and were the victims of such a mental blindness, as not to see the vanity and nothingness of all other deities." In regard to a *true notion* of Deity,—it is manifest that the Mosaic claim to it only rests on the testimony of men whose infallibility is no better vouched for than the deep thinking and philosophical reformers of Greece. And if the latter did not deny the existence of minor deities in conjunction with a superior one, the fact is no more at variance with reason than the Christian deification of Jesus, who confessed his inferiority to the Supreme God, when he said "my Father is greater than I." But when Varro discarded such popular divinities as Hercules and Æsculapius, Castor and Pollux, as being no gods, he declared that they entertained a right notion of Deity, by conceiving him to be a Soul, actuating and governing all things by his power and wisdom. Which for dignity of conception concerning God, is not sur-

passed by Christians of the present day; and successfully refutes Jahn's assertion that "they were the victims of such mental blindness as not to see the vanity of all other deities."

The Rev. H. W. Beecher, on "Grace Abounding," says, "Mythology inspired a literature in which the heathen idea of God is associated with many philosophical, many ethical, and many moral thoughts; and it has undoubtedly leavened the mind of the whole world more than we are aware, so that some have yet a conception of Jehovah as a being who is right selfish." Is it to be wondered at that some have yet such a conception of him, when Moses—who was the only one who ever knew him *face to face*, invariably represented him so throughout the whole course of his legislative career? and more especially as there is no account of his having become less partial to one particular sect or profession now, than he was when Moses acted as his viceroy! But Jesus and his followers, by becoming acquainted with the more magnanimous views of Deity conceived by the philosophers of Greece, modified the selfish idea entertained by Moses, when they inaugurated the new dispensation.

Prof. Burder, in the *Introduction* to his "History of the Religious Customs and Ceremonies of All Nations," says, "A knowledge of the opposing religious systems among mankind will evince the necessity not only of a divine revelation, but also of the direct influences of the Supreme Agent in causing mankind to harmonize in their views." In ad-



mitting the account given by Moses to be a *divine revelation*, the inquiry arises,—in what way has it ever caused mankind to *harmonize* in their religious views? Instead of producing any such conciliatory results among the human family, no system of religion with such a partial and aggressive conception of God as he inculcated, was better calculated, or ever did place mankind more openly at variance. And if Jesus and his followers had not discarded the hostile and aggressive idea entertained of God by Moses, and adopted some of the more generous and popular views embraced by the Gentile world, Christianity could never have been established. And the system will never be perfect until it is eradicated of the fanaticism it inherited from Moses.

In illustration of the biblical idea of God's malevolence towards his creatures, as endorsed by Christendom, we quote a stanzas of a hymn by the evangelical poet Dr. Watts—who with the benefit of *revelation*, is supposed to possess more correct views of God than the Gentiles—who were solely dependent on the light of Nature for their knowledge; and in contrasting it with the Pathagorean conception of Divinity, leave the reader to be his own judge of their respective merits.

“Eternal plagues, and heavy chains,  
Tormenting racks, and fiery coals,  
And darts 't inflict immortal pain,  
Dy'd in the blood of damned souls.”

## CHAPTER II.

Same subject continued in connection with the doctrine of immortality being developed among Pagan nations before it was among the Jews. Temple—Kitto—Lardner—Plato—Mosheim—Cudworth—Aristotle—Priestley—Porphyry—Plotinus—Hengstenberg—Mahomet—Knapp—Edwards—Tillotson—Fuller—Mc'Calla—Gill—Peebles—Davis—Ecce Homo—Le Clerc—Fairbairn—Homer—Hagenbach—Whately—Mani—Horsley—J. P. Thompson—Eusebius and others—David's idea of Jehovah's majesty—Ezekiel's description of a Cherub.

“To the Greeks,” says Dr. Temple, “we owe the logic which has ruled the minds of all thinkers since. All our natural and physical science really begins with the Greeks; and indeed, would have been impossible had not Greece taught men how to reason. To the Greeks we owe the corrective which conscience needs to borrow from nature. Conscience startled at the awful truths which she has to reveal, too often threatens to withdraw the soul into gloomy and perverse asceticism; then is needed the beauty which Greece taught us to admire, to show us another aspect of the Divine Attributes. To the Greeks we owe all modern literature; for though there is other literature even older than the Greek—the Asiatic for instance, or the Hebrew,—yet we did not learn this lesson from them; they had not the genial life which was needed to kindle other nations with the communication of their own fire.” (Essays and Reviews).

Dr. Kitto, in the *Introduction* to his "History of the Holy Bible," says that the word *Bible*—signifying Book, is of *Greek* origin. This is no recommendation to those reputed *God chosen* people—the Israelites, (or their descendants—the Jews), to have their *divine* revelation handed down to posterity under a *Heathen* title. Why should God suffer his *holy record* to be idolized as a gift from him under a Greek name, when he never held any intercourse or communication with those people? The Hebrews called the first part of their sacred record *Bereshith*—signifying the beginning, which is now familiar to us by the Heathen or Gentile name of *Genesis*. When the vernacular tongue of those people who adhered to the Mosaic idea of God became obsolete and superceded by language more congenial with the age, their notions of God should have been sacrificed at the same altar, and displaced by conceptions of Deity consistent with the feeling and intuitions of a progressive world.

Minutius Felix, in his comment concerning the theological views of the Greek reformers, says, "The poets plead for one intelligence, and the philosophers agree with us in the doctrine of one God; so that either the Christians are now philosophers, or the philosophers of old were Christians—thus far." But the monotheism of the poets and philosophers is at variance with the trinitarianism of Christians, by which the latter plead for *three* intelligences in the Godhead. If the Pagan oracles, as stated by Porphyry, have acknowledged the pro-

priety of worshipping only one God,—Eusebius inquires why he should consider Jesus a deceiver, when he commended the practice of that virtue to all mankind? From this we infer that Jesus agreed better with the philosophers than the great body of the Christian Church who have adopted the trifold idea of Athanasius, as endorsed by the Nicene council. Dr. Lardner, in quoting from Eusebius, says that Porphyry styled Jesus a man famous for piety and wisdom. By this we infer that Porphyry considered it unworthy a true philosopher to deceive people with the view of advancing a good cause, as the ecclesiastical writers admit was generally practised by the early reformers in the Christian Church—and even said to have been adopted by Eusebius himself. The deceit concerning Jesus—in the estimation of Porphyry, evidently consisted in the conduct of his followers, by deifying him in accordance with the religious proclivity of a polytheistic age. Lardner, in recurring to the aversion which Christians had for the name of Porphyry, produces nothing characteristically against him, and says, “Nor indeed do we meet with any reflection made upon his conduct of life,” etc., (Vol. 7, p. 392).

Plato—a zealous disciple of Socrates, believed that *God* constituted a Being comprising all other beings, and was the cause of all things terrestrial and celestial. He did not conceive that a clear knowledge of God was possible to mortals; but that his perfection was such that all his works must

necessarily be good. As Moses conceived that God performed works that he subsequently repented of, (Gen. 6 : 6), the conclusion is that all the works of God in his estimation were *not* very good in their moral result. Dr. Moshein, says, "Of all the philosophers, Plato seems to have made the nearest approach to true wisdom. He considered the Deity, to whom he gave the supreme government of the universe, as a being of the highest wisdom and power, and totally unconnected with any material substance. The souls of men he considered to proceed from this pre-eminent source; and as partakers of its nature, to be incapable of death. He also gave the strongest encouragement to virtue, and equally discountenanced vice, by holding out to mortals the prospect of a future state of rewards and punishment." As Moses ignored future rewards and punishment in his *divine* revelation,—and Plato taught it long anterior to the time of Christ, it is not to be wondered at that Father Origen, one of the most assiduous laborers and voluminous writers in defence of Christianity during the patristic period—should be so overwhelmingly prepossessed in favor of Platonism! According to Socrates Scholasticus, the Anthropomorphite monks of Egypt, threatened death to Theophilus—Bishop of Alexandria, if he did not execrate and denounce the writings of Origen concerning Deity, and profess belief in a corporeal God of human form.

In regard to the theopathic views of Aristotle, the student of Plato in ethical philosophy,—Dr.

Cudworth, in his "Intellectual System of the Universe," says, "We cannot deny but that Aristotle has been charged by sundry of the ancients, Christians and Jews, for not so explicitly asserting these two things, the immortality of the human soul, and providence over men, as he ought to have done, and as his master Plato did." If they should *tax* him for not being so explicit as Plato, on the doctrine of immortality, why should they not *tax* Moses more heavily for not even opening his mouth upon the subject? Prof. Edwards in his *Miscellaneous* works, says, "Socrates, Plato, and Cicero, who were more inclined to a belief of a future existence, than the other philosophers, plead for it with argument of no force; speak of it with the utmost uncertainty, and therefore are afraid to found their systems of duty and virtue on expectation of it." But why Moses failed to speak of it all, when ordaining his system of virtue and worship, he does not state, but asserts that "if Christianity came too late into the world, what is called natural religion came full as late." But the evidence from antiquity is decisive that Christianity was more the outgrowth of natural religion, or Paganism, than the product of Mosaic revelation, from the fact that natural religionists like the Greeks, aspired to a future life of happiness through merits of a virtuous one here: which spiritual anticipation the Hebrew Lawgiver was silent on.

Cudworth, in expatiating on the Atomical or corpuscular system of ancient atheistical philosophy,



traces it back to Moschus—a Phoenician philosopher mentioned by Posidonius, that flourished prior to the Trojan war. Arcerius—the publisher of Jamblichus, infers that this Moschus, or Mochus, was the celebrated Moses of the Jews, with whose successors, the Hebrew prophets and priests, Pythagoras convened at Sidon.

Dr. Priestly—whose profound labors in defence of Christianity, justly entitles his works to a place in the front ranks of the *Evidences*, says, “Without an idea of God different from what we could collect from a contemplation of nature, there would be no such thing as *prayer*.” Yet he must have been acquainted with the fact that prayer was not enjoined by the Lord in the system of worship ordained by Moses—the only man who ever held familiar intercourse with him; and that Christ warned his disciples against practicing the vanity of making so many useless repetitions in their prayers as the Heathen did, who supposed they would be heard for their much speaking. This furnishes conclusive evidence that the Pagan nations must have become accustomed to praying from natural religion, or the light of Nature, the same as the Jews or primitive Christians did, in the absence of any revelation in the Law of God—as given by Moses requiring it. Christ merely made an improvement on the Pagan custom of praying so much, by making fewer words answer the purpose. By neglecting to instruct his disciples in any special form until

they requested it of him, in imitation of John the Baptist, leaves the impression that he placed but little valuation on formal prayer, (Luke 11 : 1).

Priestly, on "Revealed Religion," in his remarks concerning the Platonists, or Eclectics—to whom the emperor Julian had attached himself, controverts his own assertion, by saying—"The piety of Proclus, one of the most celebrated of them, is highly extolled by his biographer. He spent whole days and nights in repeating prayers and hymns, that he might prepare himself for an immediate intercourse with Deity. And on occasions he imagined that he conversed with superior beings, and was enabled by prayers, sacrifices and hymns to expel diseases, to command rain, to stop earthquakes, and to perform other similar miracles." He also states that Plotinus is said to have ascended through all the Platonic steps of contemplation, to the actual vision of the Supreme Being; and to have been admitted to such an intercourse with him as no other philosopher ever enjoyed. Howitt, in his account of the great theurgist Apollonius of Tyana—who was to the Greeks what Jesus was in Judaism—and born about the same time, says, "Wherever he went, he incited to purity, to prayer, and morality; he cured the most dangerous diseases, and predicted future events," etc. (History of the Supernatural, Vol I. p. 472).

Jamblichus—who maintained that the human soul has an innate knowledge of God, prior to all reasoning, in consequence of having originally de-



rived its essence from, and having subsisted in the Divine Nature, is also said to have attained an eminent degree of perfection and heavenly felicity. And Priestly admits that Porphyry—who has been stigmatized as an *infidel* from the early days of Christianity to the present time, because he opposed the sectarian bigotry and dogmas of the Christian Church—was, in the 63th year of his age, entranced in a sacred ecstasy, attended with a vision of the Supreme Intelligence—the God, who he declared to be superior to all gods without an image. How much more the pious and devoted Jesus of Nazareth resembled those devout Pagan philosophers in his life and mode of worship than he did Moses! Though he is theologically held up as the prophet that Moses said the Lord should raise up like unto him, (Deut. 18: 18), yet that prophecy does not appear to have had a literal fulfilment until the time of Mahammed, when the Lord raised up a prophet very much like unto Moses. And Dr. Hengstenburg on the “Christology of the Old Testament,” says, “The exclusive reference to the Messiah is inconsistent with verse 20-22. The marks of a false prophet are given in them;” etc. (Vol. 1. p. 114). But we do not infer that he supposed the Mosaic prophecy to have reference to the Arabian chieftain, as the *false* prophet, for that reformer prophesied with more importance to the human race than Moses, inasmuch as he foretold immortality to his followers.

Although theologians maintain that the light of

Nature could never have wrought any moral improvement in the condition of mankind,—the advanced state of Grecian literature and morality in connection with divine worship, which had been attained through the contemplation of Nature, over the more ancient mode of Heathen worship, sufficiently refutes their argument. As an instance, the discontinuance of that licentious form of public prostitution spoken of by Herodotus, as being common among the ancient Heathen in their temple worship, could not have resulted from Bible revelation, for the Egyptians—according to his testimony, were the first who denounced the practice of it in their temples: at a period long anterior to the time when Moses instituted his laws on chastity to those lewd Israelites. Dr. Knapp, on the “Innate Knowledge of God,” in regard to the Heathen, says, “They, indeed have no direct revelation; but they know from their own nature that the same things are right and wrong which revelation declares to be so, and they act accordingly.” If the light of Nature teaches them what is right and wrong, and they act accordingly, it at once proves the inutility of revelation, for those who claim to be the favored recipients of it do not *act accordingly*. And Dr. Wayland admits that natural religion “does teach some unquestionable truths.”

Professor Edwards on the “History of Human Redemption,” says, “The light of nature doth not teach men to offer up beasts in sacrifice to God; and seeing it was not enjoined by the law of nature,

to be acceptable to God, it must be by some positive command or institution." But the evidence is clear from antiquity that the custom was prevalent among Pagan nations, before Moses instituted it among the Israelites. And in the advanced state of Grecian learning, those poets, in their lofty conceptions of divinity—as dictated by the light of Nature, could not reconcile such an inconsistent notion of God-worship as required the burning of beasts, to be in accordance with the sense and reason with which the God of Nature had invested them. And on the "Final Judgment," Edwards says, "The doctrine of a general judgment is not sufficiently discoverable by the light of nature. Indeed some of the Heathens had some obscure notions concerning a future judgment. But the light of nature, or mere unassisted reason, was not sufficient to instruct the world of fallen men in this doctrine. It is one of the peculiar doctrines of revelation." But the revelation of Moses, founded on *Thus saith the Lord*, did not even give an *obscure notion* of such future event as that of a final judgment, which he admits the Heathen were in possession of. This doctrine of a final judgment, which was taught in Persia centuries before the Christian era, was the conception of a later period than the age in which Moses wrote; and as incorporated into the Christian theology from Pagan mythology, has no higher claims to revelation than the collateral evidence of *Verily, verily, I say unto you*.

Archbishop Tillotson, on *Inspiration*, (Vol 6 of

his sermons), says, "For it is not at all unsuitable to the wisdom of God to make a *supernatural discovery* to us of such things as may be known by the light of nature, either to give us clearer manifestation of such truths as were more obscurely known, and did as it were lie buried in our own understanding," etc. Thus the Grecian sages, by the application of those *truths*, which were—according to Tillotson's idea, *concealed in their own understandings*, arrived at a conception of Deity more consistent with reason and common sense, than the reputed *divine* and *supernatural discovery* of Moses. This fact affords clear evidence that the Jewish idea of a Supreme Being is in conflict with those *truths* which Tillotson says may be known from the light of Nature.

This opinion is corroborated by Andrew Fuller, who, on the "Standard of Morality," in his remarks concerning the important place the light of Nature occupies in the divine government, says, "Nature and Scripture appear to me to be as much in harmony as Moses and Christ; both are celebrated in the same Psalm." If Nature and scripture do not *harmonize* better than Moses and Christ in their doctrinal views of God, they unequivocally stand widely separated. The former cannot be shown by his writings to have been any other than a materialist as far as immortality is concerned, and *inspired* by his intuitions of Deity to instigate people to engage in aggressive wars and bloodshed, for the purpose of plundering property to obtain wealth and luxury in this life, while the latter was

decidedly spiritualistic in his religious sentiment, and *inspired* by his idea of God to love all, deprecate fighting, forgive enemies, and live in poverty. Dr. McCalla, in his *Discussion* with Alexander Campbell, said, "When I say that God gave the same religion to the Jews and Christians, I mean that the religion of the Old Testament and that of the New are essentially the same, notwithstanding the great difference in the two administrations." Though Moses and Christ, the reputed founders of the two systems, apparently recognize the same God, (acknowledged by all nations under various titles), yet no two religious creeds ever advocated among diverse Pagan nations were more antithetical in the abstract. He might as well attempt to reconcile the religion of Budha with that of Mahomet, as to claim that the opposing systems of Moses and Jesus were identical.

Dr. Gill, in endeavoring to show that Christ was the only means of salvation before his incarnation, says, "The Gentiles were not saved by the light of nature, nor the Jews by the Law of Moses; the one were not lost for the want of circumcision, nor the other saved by it;" etc. This is placing the light of Nature on a parallel with God's reputed divine Law, but equally invalidates both in saving efficacy; for all are "theologically" doomed to ruin without something more efficacious. Thus as far as salvation is concerned—which is paramount to every thing else, God is supposed to have accomplished nothing by either; and is rendered of no

spiritual or eternal benefit to the human race without the vicarious intercession of a *Mediator*—under whose sentence, Dr. Breckinridge, says the damned shall perish forever!

In regard to sex or gender in the Deity, as worshipped in ancient Judaism and Paganism,—J. M. Peebles, on the *Existence of God*, in his “Seers of the Ages,” says, “According to Michelange Lanci, the Egyptian hieroglyphs, interpreted in the light of Egyptian theosophy, taught that both the male and female principles adhered in Deity, *spirit* and *matter*, as father and mother. Indian Gymnosophists also admitted, in the most ancient periods, the duality of the Divine Existence.” Such an idea seems to be an antological approximation to the conceptions of that famous harmonial philosopher and herald of modern reform, A. J. Davis, who terms *Deity* the great Positive Mind of the universe, constituting Father *God*, and Mother *Nature*. Peebles further says, “Abraham, a dissatisfied, ambitious Brahmin, inaugurated the worship of an intuitive *masculine* God. Moses built upon the same rock, hence his masculine, blood-thirsty, retaliatory laws founded upon “Thus saith the Lord.” And the popular Pauline Christianity of the past eighteen centuries, is Judaism, only slightly galvanized.” Though Paul manifestly adhered to the Jewish notions of Jehovah as taught by Moses, yet in a spiritual sense, his religious principles may be considered *bountifully galvanized* in comparison with the sensuous conceptions of



ancient Judaism as transmitted through the teaching of the Law. For in uniting the doctrine of immortality with the corporeal theopathy of Moses, he was inspired with a more supernal idea of God than the Hebrew lawgiver, whose mundane proclivities limited the rewards of a virtuous life to this world only. Though Paul had obtained the fundamental principles of his religion from Paganism,—yet, with that incorrigible perverseness that marked the Jewish character, he was inflexible in his determination not to abandon the Mosaic idea of God.

Concerning the doctrine of immortality among the ancient Greeks—previous to the literary and philosophical development that marked the Platonic age,—the anonymous author of *Ecce Homo*, on “Christ’s Royalty”—when referring to the time that intervened between Abraham or Moses, and Christ, says, “It is surprising that the early Jews, in whom the sense of God was so strong, and who were so familiar with the conceptions of an Eternal Being, should have yet been behind rather than before other nations in suspecting the immortality of the soul. The Greeks did not even in the earliest times believe death to be an annihilation, though they thought it fatal to all joy and vigor. But the early Jews, the Legislator himself, and most of the Psalmists, limit their hopes and fears to the present life, and compare man to the beasts that perish.” This fact, which is sustained by their record, furnishes indubitable evidence that the Jews, with

their arrogated claim to a *divine* revelation from heaven through Moses, as dictated by the *only true God*, were less enlightened in regard to man's spiritual and eternal destiny than the cotemporary Gentile nations who made no such vain-glorious assumptions; and furnishes ample evidence that Moses entertained very imperfect ideas in relation to a Divine and eternal Being.

Dr. Fairbairn, in his *Typology* admits that "Abraham died with such a dim notion of the future, that he went to a better inheritance like one who knew not whither he went." And in an *Appendix* to the subject says, "First of all we look to the general fact that some how, and in some form or another, a belief in the doctrine of the soul's immortality has prevailed in the nations which had only natural sources to guide them in their religious views and tenets. . . . Among all nations that have reached any degree of civilization and intelligence, it is notorious that the doctrine has always held a recognized and prominent place in their articles of popular belief." This establishes the opinion that those nations who were dependent on the light of Nature for their ideas of Divinity in connection with future life, arrived at a belief in immortality in advance of those people who pretended to direct revelation from what was termed the *true God*, like Abraham and Moses. And Le Clerc, says, "In general, the doctrine of a future state has been adopted by all nations, at least by all those that deserve to be cited as examples. Legislators considered it the most ef-



fectual curb for restraining the passions of men, and they have employed every argument to establish this salutary doctrine." As the Jewish legislator failed to inculcate this *salutary doctrine*, the inference is that he was not a lawgiver that *deserves to be cited as an example!* The descent of Ulysses into hell—as narrated by Homer, and the description of Minos in the shades below, distributing justice to the souls of those assembled around his tribunal, in pronouncing irrevocable judgments that decided their everlasting fate, shows that the Greeks believed in, or at least taught the doctrine of future rewards and punishment during the prophetic period of the Old Testament—the writers of which either ignored, or placed but little valuation on it.

Archbishop Whately—who seems to have followed in Bishop Warburton's track, in his *Essay* on the "Revelation of a Future State," infers from an expression of Plato—that men in general were highly incredulous as to the soul's future existence; that such must have been the popular opinion: when in reality their incredulity on the subject does not appear to have been more prevalent than it is in Christian countries at the present day. Even the Christian church, according to Dr. Hagenbach—professor of Theology, in the University at Basle—did not universally believe in the doctrine of immortality previous to the dawn of the Protestant Reformation. In criticising the different religious views of Plato and Aristotle, he says, "At last the council of Lateran, held A. D. 1513, under Pope Leo 10th.,

pronounced the natural immortality of the soul to be an article of faith, and discarded the distinction between theological and philosophical truths as untenable." The command of Moses denouncing those who consulted with *familiar spirits*, like the Canaanites, (Deut. 18: 11), gives evidence that those Heathen, by having intercourse with the invisible world, must have believed in future existence. As such belief had evidently led to deifying eminent and worthy men who had passed from earth,—the Hebrew lawgiver, in his unyielding hostility to polytheism, apparently considered it judicious to discard the doctrine of future life for the purpose of establishing a monotheism; and whereby he abrogated the theological necessity for even one personal God, by rejecting the chief corner on which religious worship is built.

The extravagant idea entertained of Moses and his economy, by Mani, or Manicheus—whose religious sentiment spread so extensively through the East during the second and third centuries—and who was adored by his followers as the *Paraclete* or *Comforter*, that Christ promised to send to his disciples, is shown by the following quotation from Mosheim, who devotes more than 150 pages of his *Commentaries* in defining his religious tenets, "Now when Satan perceived that Christ intended to subvert his empire, and to abolish the law he had enacted through Moses, he formed the purpose of destroying him. He therefore instigated the Jews, the most faithful subjects over whom he

reigned, to seize Christ and nail him to the cross ;” etc. Mani held that God had no definite form, and was not confined to any particular part of the world of light, but overspread and filled the whole universe. Wild and visionary as Christian apologists represent him to have been in his metaphysical views, his conceptions of Deity were decidedly superior to, and in advance of the local and corporeal ideas conceived by Moses.

Bishop Horsley, in his observations on the works of *Creation*, says that “the Mosaic narration of it, affords an historical confutation of all systems of materialism and idolatry, as it contradicts in one point or another, all the principles on which any such systems can be founded.” Yet his system never eradicated *idolatry* and it is clear that if *materialism* was not founded on his revelation and legislation, it was the apparent result of his indomitable attack on Fetichism. This is sufficiently demonstrated by the tenacious adherence to the anti-spiritual doctrine of his most zealous advocates—the Sadducees, in the time of Christ. And while Moses states, without any geological or scientific basis, that God created the world in six days, apparently out of nothing, (which is accepted by Christians as a divine revelation), the philosophical Greek mind called such cosmology into question by inquiring whether matter is not eternal, on the ground that the world could not have been produced from nothing. And this problem still re-

mains an abstract question in the human mind, because its solution is beyond finite wisdom. Dr. J. P. Thompson, in his "Man in Genesis and Geology," says that Moses knew nothing of geology; and in closing his book by giving a biblical view of God, continues the subject by saying "The successive acts of creation here described may all have gone forward by that uniformity of procedure which we characterize by the name Law, which, after all, is but one mode of describing certain actions or effects of the Divine will." This view certainly harmonizes better with Greek philosophy than Hebrew cosmogony; for the idea of a creation by *Law*, through a succession of geological periods—including an indefinite length of time, was unquestionably as foreign to the conceptions of Moses, as his ideas of God and creation are to progressive minds in an age of science and criticism. He also says, "Plato was right in counting the divine ideas the real substances, and those conceptions which originate in the intelligent will of God. Nature, acting as His power-loom, *must* work up according to the pattern;" etc. But Moses, throughout the whole course of his revelation and economy, was so completely absorbed in the idea of a personal God operating in accordance with human actions, that he would have been as much opposed to the scientific view of Nature acting as a *power-loom* for God, *to work up according to the pattern*, as a modern geologist is to the assumption that God fabricated the universe in six ordinary days—three of which were attended with mornings

and evenings before the sun was made! His record of God's work in the beginning does not compare so favorably with science and philosophy as the cosmogony of Thoth, as given by Sanchoniatho. Though as Prof. Rawlinson, on the *Pentateuch*, says, "The book is exactly such a one as a writer of the age, character, and circumstances of Moses might be expected to produce!"

Eusebius endeavors to show that Thoth supposed the earth to be a planet; and in his "History of Ancient Paganism," says, "Thus Thoth, like an able politician, disfigured natural religion, by introducing notions which served as a foundation to Paganism; and would to God that some such great men, who call themselves Christians, had not with like views, disfigured the same religion which Jesus Christ had re-established, by adopting into it other absurdities still more unworthy the true God, and more pernicious to mankind than those of *Ancient Paganism*." Thus the innovations of Thoth, (founder of Egyptian worship), were, in the estimation of that famous *Father* of Ecclesiastical History, less pernicious to mankind, and less detractious to the true God, than the absurdities with which professed Christians had *disfigured* the *same* religion which Jesus Christ had re-established.

The Psalmist David, in a lofty flight of his imagination, expressed an idea of the Lord, that bears a more striking analogy to some Grecian fable in point of romance than it does to the more consistent views entertained of Deity by the poets of Greece.

In an exalted strain of adoration he says, "The Lord rode on a cherub, and smoke went out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth," (Ps. 18: 8, 10). Divines generally inform us that such *sublime* language as that must necessarily be considered in a figurative sense. But Dr. Davidson, on the "Use of Reason in the Exposition of Scripture," says, "The Bible therefore is to be explained on the same principle as other books. Words should be taken in their ordinary acceptation, unless the contrary is expressly stated or fairly implied." As the contrary here is *not expressly stated or fairly implied*, we will, on his authority suppose that the Lord actually rode in a personal manner in accordance with the language of the Psalmist. In order then to arrive at some adequate idea of his appearance when traveling in that manner, it will be requisite to make some digression, for the purpose of ascertaining, if possible, what a *cherub* is.

Though theologically supposed to be a being of the angelic order, it nevertheless appears to have been anciently represented in the form of an ox. Josephus portrays cherubim to be "extraordinary creatures of a figure unknown to mankind." But the most graphical account of their appearance is perhaps given by Ezekiel; who describes them as having four faces—that of a man, of a lion, an ox, and an eagle; with four wings, and straight brazen feet like calves; having hands under each wing, (Ezk. 1: 6, 10). In his second description of them (10: 14), he relates their appearance somewhat dif-



ferent, and in describing one, substitutes the face of a *cherub* for the face of an ox. As it is rather a clumsy way of deliniating a cherub to say that one of its faces was the face of a *cherub*, we are willing to suppose that he must have been so overcome with the wonderful appearance of the *celestial* creature, that he became nervously confused in his vision, and left it for our wonder and admiration in that ambiguous manner. For this of course we can cheerfully excuse him, as we might have made a worse blunder under similar circumstances! Then in arriving at the conclusion that the Lord literally rode on such an awful looking monster as that portrayed by the prophet—spitting fire as he went, and the smoke fuming out of his nostrils,—would it not be interesting to know whether his speed was equal to that of Mahomet on Alborak? The psalmist might congratulate himself with the idea that the Lord did not share the fate of Helle, daughter of Athamas, king of Thebes; who in her aerial flight for Colchis, to avoid the oppression of her step-mother, Ino, became giddy on her *golden ram*, (procured from Neptune by her unjustly divorced mother, Nephele), and fell into that part of the sea, which—sacred to her memory, has ever since been called the *Hellespont*.

### CHAPTER III.

Incongruity and changeability, consistent with the Hebrew conception of God—Edwards—W. Thompson—Spurgeon—Volney—Gaussen—Fairbairn—Jowett—Le Clerc—Shaftsbury—Beecher—Fenelon—God's Jealousy—Calvin—Bunyan—Warburton—Stebbing—Jahn—Contradictory statements by different Biblical authors in regard to seeing God—Nichols—W. Smith—Ushur—Pagan idea of Jupiter, etc.

As the biblical record was many centuries in course of composition, the writers have, in consequence of the change and progress of the human mind during the successive periods in which they lived, ascribed a diversity of nature and character to Deity, in accordance with their peculiar religious feeling and impressions. Some portray him to be a dreadful being, dealing out the most furious and vindictive judgments; while others represent him as being unparalleled in love and mercy. Moses (*Deut.* 4-24) says, "The Lord God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God: and John, in one of his epistles says he is *love*. The Apostle James (5: 11) says, "The Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy:" But Jeremiah (13: 14) says, "I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and sons together, saith the Lord: I will not pity nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them. He further says (17: 4) that a fire was kindled in the anger of the Lord which should burn forever. Such an idea



of his enduring wrath will "Scripturally" do to contrast with the discrepant language of the Psalmist when he declares that his anger endures but a moment! (Ps. 30 : 5.) An intellectual mind cannot fail to feel convinced that any being who has not sufficient self-control and discretion in connection with his temporal concerns to refrain from becoming angry, is unworthy the name or adoration of Deity.

Some idea of the theological conception of God's anger might be given by a quotation from a *sermon* of J. Edwards—the great metaphysician of his age, on "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," preached at Enfield, July 8th, 1741, at a time of, *Revival*. He says, "Yea God is a great deal more angry with great numbers that are now on earth; yea doubtless with many that are now in this congregation who may be at ease, than he is with many that are now in the flames of hell. . . . The wrath of God burns against them, their damnation does not slumber; the pit is prepared, the fire is made ready, the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them; the flames to rage and glow;" etc. In the same discourse he further says, "The devil stands ready to fall upon them, and seize them as his own at what moment God shall permit him." With such a terrible idea of God's malignity, it would be difficult to tell which was most to be dreaded—him or the Devil! for it unequivocally places them on a parallel in regard to malevolence and lack of humanity.

Lord Bishop Thompson, says, "When we speak of God's anger, we mean nothing more nor less than his will to punish. The moment that will is withdrawn, there is neither anger nor punishment to fear." Such sentiment in regard to the qualities of God, plainly implies a susceptibility on his part to variableness and change; with whom St. James, says, "there is no variableness or shadow of turning." Though in contradiction to that, the Lord said, (Zech. 1: 3), "he would *turn* if the people would." And according to Hosea, (11: 8), "his heart *turned* within him and his repentings kindled together." When Jeremiah's heart turned within him, (Lam. 1: 20), it was the acknowledged result of his rebellion; but we are in a quandary to know whom the Lord could rebel against, to place him in *heart turning* circumstances. The declaration that his heart turned *within* him, would not sound so extraordinary, if the impracticability of its turning *without* him was taken into consideration! The prophet Nahum, (1; 2), says, "God is jealous and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and reserveth wrath for his enemies." The assumption that God had adversaries and enemies toward whom he manifested a jealous and revengeful disposition, was merely an illusion feigned for an apparent worthy purpose in the age that it was preached; and rendered nugatory in a period of the world fraught with biblical criticism and free inquiry after divine truth concerning God. The

Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, in a *Sermon* on "Proving God," from Mal. 3: 10 (Vol. 4) says "I do not think any of the children of God, proves all of God, but that they are all proving different parts of his one grand character, so that when the whole history of providence shall be written, and the lives of all the saints shall be recorded, the title of the book will be 'Proofs of God.' There will be one compenduous *proof*, that he is God, and changeth not; that with him *there is no variableness or shadow of turning.*" But such a comprehensive idea of God and his immutability is by no means in harmony with the mobility ascribed to him by the Hebrew writers, from whom he selects the subject of his discourse for the purpose of illustrating his infinitude and unchangeability. For according to Isaiah, the Lord commanded him to inform King Hezekiah that he should die, and not live, in consequence of his sickness; but after making the announcement to the king, he had not got out of the middle court in his departure, before the Lord gave him an order to return and tell him that his prayer was heard, and that fifteen years more should be added to his life. (2 Kings 20.) An omniscient Being would have known before the first message was delivered that the event would not take place according to the *divine* announcement. Such mutability and lack of regard on the part of the Lord for his own word, shows that those Jewish writers supposed God liable to those changes incident to human fallibility; and that he could hastily set at naught his

declared word in a manner irrelevant with the stability and wisdom essential to characterize Divinity in an age like the present.

His instability is also acknowledged by Jeremiah when he says, "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck it up, and to pull it down, and to destroy it. If that nation against which I have pronounced turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom to plant and to build it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I will benefit them," (Jer. 18 : 7-10. According to such a course of procedure in dealing with nations and kingdoms, a change in the conduct of the people would alter a solemn decree of the Lord, and cause him to violate an unconditional denunciation or promised blessing. This may be considered irrefragible testimony in confirmation of the belief that those prophets supposed threats and promised favors of the Lord to be suspended on human contingencies, in congruity with his natural fugacity. It also vindicates a declaration of Mohammed, who in his *Al Koran*, (chap. 30) says, "The greater part of men know not the veracity of God."

In regard to the irreconcilable ideas of God presented by different biblical writers being adapted to the feeling of the present age, the *Reply* of Volney, in answer to Dr. Prestly *Letters*, might be aptly

applied, when he says, "Now if you admit, with Locke, and us infidels, that every one has the right of rejecting whatever is contrary to his natural reason; and that all our ideas and all our knowledge is acquired by the inlets of our external senses; what becomes of the system of revelation, and of that order of things in times past, which is so contrary to that of the present? unless we consider it as a dream of the human brain during the state of superstitious ignorance." For it is obvious that the conceptions formed of God by any one individual, as given in past ages cannot be stereotyped as a divine revelation of him adapted to all succeeding ages, for the inspired feeling of each writer was only appropriate to his own instinctive notions on the subject.

Dr. Gaussen, on the "Individuality of the Sacred Writers," in his *Theopneustia*, when admitting that two different impulses have acted at the same time on the same authors, while they were composing the Scriptures, says, "Were it God who speaks alone and constantly in the Scriptures, we should see in their various parts, an uniformity which is not to be found there." From this we infer that the record which is revered as the harmonious word of God, is only the written excogitations of men actuated by conflicting *impulses*—devoid of uniformity, and exemplifying their various ideas of God and his attributes. And Dr. Fairbairn in his *Hermeneutical Manual*, when collecting from the works of antiquity, material which he adduces as collateral

sources for elucidating the discrepant and contradictory parts of that record which is accepted by the church as the divinely inspired and infallible word of God, cites the Rabinical writings contained in the Mishna and Gemara, when at the same time he says, "There are few writings extant, perhaps, that contain a larger proportion of what may be called rubbish than these Talmudical productions."

According to Prof. Jowett, the Scripture Revelation was given in adaptation to the state of the human mind in the different periods in which it was made known. On the interpretation of Scripture, he says, "Neither is it easy to make them understand the growth of revelation in successive ages,—that there are precepts of the Old Testament which are reversed in the New, or that Moses allowed many things for the hardness of men's hearts. They are in one state of the world, and the missionary who teaches them in another; and the Book through which they are taught does not altogether coincide with either," (Ess. and Rev. p. 472). If Moses moulded a portion of the Bible to suit the condition of men's hearts,—agreeable with the language of Christ, and the whole book constituting the word of God, where is the philological critic to draw his line of distinction between Moses and God?

When the Israelites murmured at the destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, together with the 250 princes connected with the rebellion, the Lord requested Moses to separate himself from the con-



gregation that he might consume them in a moment, (Num. 16: 21). Such a command conveys the idea that he did not acknowledge his ability to save him unless he withdrew from the company. Though from his former history we might suppose him to be invulnerable to the destructive fury of the Lord, as he failed to kill him on a previous occasion when he sought to! (Ex. 4: 24). On this occasion when the Lord's anger was in full blast, Moses commanded Aaron to go immediately with his censur and incense to make atonement for the people; for, says he, "There is wrath gone out from the Lord." In consequence of this *wrath* proceeding from the Lord, 14,700 people were slain before Aaron could bring his incense into successful operation so as to counteract the disastrous performance of the Lord. But fortunately for Israel, he at length triumphed over Jehovah, and subdued the raging pestilence, which commentator Scott considers decisive proof of the efficacy of his priesthood!

Without any remarks on such a ridiculous idea as that of an Omnipotent Being having his operations frustrated by the ceremonial performance of a man who had but recently been blotted out of his book, (Ex. 32: 33)—there was no just cause for wrath to have gone from the Lord on this occasion; for there was no imprudent motive assigned to the apparently intelligent and honorable company who made this judicious move for a more equally distributed and republican form of government. As

the Lord was among them—according to their ideas, they considered the whole congregation equally holy, (Num. 16: 3). But according to the narrative, Moses soon let them know who was “holy;” and the disastrous issue of the rebellion as related by the mythologist, shows the futility and terrible consequences of attempting to overthrow tyranny and despotism in that period of the world. But as Moses, only a short time before, had been praying for the Lord to relieve him of his heavy responsibility in having the exclusive charge of so many people—it being too great for him, (Num. 11: 14, 15)—the whole calamitous rebellion and national catastrophe is at once perceptibly betrayed, and its claim to credibility assigned a place with mythological and unhistoric romance.

After the people’s idolatrous conduct during the absence of Moses on the mount, the Lord desired Moses to let him alone that his wrath might wax hot, for the purpose of consuming them. This involves the idea that he could not have possessed any natural affection for his so-called chosen people; and clearly implies an admission on his part of Mosaic ability to divert his purposes; thereby proving that he was undetermined and without any mind of his own, or but a weak and fluctuating one at best. His language to Moses was, “Now, therefore, let me alone,” etc., (Ex. 32: 10), which is a plain and special command for him not to officiate as an intercessor for the people, with a view of effecting a change in his intended course of procedure. But



Moses disobediently took liberty to set his command at naught, and immediately began to persuade him out of his contemplated destructive policy. Though the Lord did not upbraid him for a breach of divine order,—yet it would have been as consistent with his represented irritable nature, for him to have broke out in a paroxysm of anger at Moses for his disobedience, as it was to become so provoked at those ignorant Israelites for disobediently resorting to their former mode of worship in the absence of their leader. The conduct of the people cannot be shown to have been the result of any vicious motive, but was only in consequence of their ignorance in not knowing how to worship consistent with their predilections without some symbolical object of adoration; and the use of which was no more sacrilegious then than it was before the Lord (or Moses) had forbidden it. But when the Lord discovered through the sagacious counsel of Moses, that it would be to his disgrace to destroy the people in the wilderness, in consequence of the reports that would be circulated in Egypt concerning his failure to accomplish what he had undertook, he repented of the evil, that he thought to do unto them! (Ex. 32: 14). The prophet Malachi, (3: 6), says that the sons of Jacob were not consumed because the Lord changed not; but on this occasion the sons of Jacob were not consumed because the Lord *did* change!

Archbishop Ushur, says, that “Moses by prayer pacified God:” and it seems caused him to repent

of his projected course. But Moses never repented of the actual slaughter that he caused to be made among the people, by commanding the Levites to gird on their swords and slay their neighbors, friends and companions. It is lamentable for the victims that there was no one to *pacify* the fury of Moses. Prof. Schmucker maintains that Moses was no enthusiast, and says, "With what holy indignation did his pious soul behold the idolatry of the Jews, after his return from his sublime interview with God upon the mount." What a *pious soul* he must have been, to order the priests to engage in such a work of human butchery!

Theologians—having their eyes beclouded with the *veil* of Moses, can see no impropriety in his conduct, nor incongruity in the nature and qualities of his feigned God, although he is repeatedly represented as repenting and changing his plans through the admonition of this former fugitive from justice. But the idea of an omniscient and immutable Being having his purposes counteracted, and his natural ferocity mitigated by being brought to repentance through the advice of such a ruthless character as Moses proved himself to be, has less plausibility attached to it than the legend of the latter being placed by the river in his infancy for safety, at a place where the king's daughter was in the habit of going to wash herself; and then adopted as a member of his own household, in open violation of his laws.

A knowledge of the mythological systems of reli-

gious worship which prevailed among Pagan nations cotemporary with the Israelites, at the time when Moses instituted his mode of worship among them, elicits the fact that the mutable and dreadful nature of Deity as exemplified in his legislation, was in general consistency with the established faith of all nations anterior to the development of Grecian philosophy and literature. The dissimilitude of the Hebrew mythology consisted chiefly in the establishment of the theistical idea conceived by Abraham, which prohibited the use of symbols or images in worship, which was then almost universally practised ; and the institution of such superstitious ceremonies in connection with the tabernacle, as the author considered practically wise to inaugurate. Though the Apostle Paul, in ratifying the new dispensation, had to some extent renounced Judaism and embraced the more lovely and spiritual principles of Christianity, yet he still adhered to the ancient notion of God's revengeful and passionate nature, by reminding the *Hebrews* that he *sware* in his wrath that the great portion of his erratic people should not enter into his rest. Which *rest*, at the time when the oath was taken, was limited in its signification to the enjoyment of an earthly inheritance which they obtained by killing the rightful owners and plundering their property. For the doctrine of a future state of rest—judging from the Lord's manner of revealing the Jewish system of religion, was not yet conceived either by him or his egregious people. He seems to have considered

it of more importance to spend his time with Moses in giving instructions in regard to what kind of meats they should eat in this life, than by making any revelation to them concerning life hereafter, (Levit. 11).

In writing to the Ephesians, Paul speaks of them as having formerly been "children of wrath, even as others:" by which he seems to have believed that all mankind were originally similar in nature to the feigned God of Israel, (who was noted for wrath), but from which he endeavors to show that a change was requisite in order to escape the eternal wrath of that God. According to his idea, the object of the Law was to work wrath. (Rom. 4 : 15). This appears to have been so successful in a theological sense, that in order to avert the *Divine* wrath against the whole race, a mythic notion was invented which required a harmless individual to be sacrificed, that God might thereby become reconciled to such as were sufficiently credulous to believe that he demanded such a barbarous human-immolation. But Paul considered it an all-essential improvement in the doctrine of *bloody atonement*, over that of the Jewish custom of offering beasts in sacrifice, which made no proviso for future salvation. But Christ not being a God of anger and wrath, made but little account of the Mosaic law of the Lord. For on one occasion when a Jewish lawyer asked him which was the great commandment of the Law? he replied by saying—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and

with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," (Matt. 22: 37-39). When in fact there were no such commands of love given in the original Law, as said to have been written by the finger of God on the tables of stone. His two commands, not only cover the whole Law, but so much more that no human being can ever obey them.

The Psalmist harps much upon the anger of the Lord, and says that he is angry every day—the translator interpolating the words, *with the wicked*, (Ps. 7: 11). Such an uninterrupted state of ill feeling does not admit of a very desirable condition of mind in regard to his own happiness. Solomon says that anger rests in the bosom of fools, (Ecc. 7: 9.) If God is angry every day, anger must have a resting-place within him. Such being the case, it renders Israel's idea of God—in the estimation of the wisest man their nation ever produced, but little superior to the lowest class of society. And his ill reputation is further sustained through the Bible by his addictedness to the obnoxious habit of cursing and swearing.

Theologians inform us that as God is infinite, and man finite, he therefore does not get angry, curse, swear, and repent on the same principle that man does, though in the "plenitude" of their wisdom concerning him, they cannot help admitting that such gross passions and fallible characteristic human traits are rather detractive to the name of

infinite perfection ; and that there are no elevating or heavenly impressions to be derived from such carnal examples. If the words *angry*, *repent*, etc., when used in relation to the feeling or conduct of the Lord, are not to be applied or understood as they were obviously intended by the biblical writers—and according to their literal signification, it is highly important that we have a more consistent translation of the Lord's manner of revealing himself to his *chosen*, though miscreant people, that the name of Divinity be no longer degraded by being held liable to sensuous and gross human passions. LeClerc says, "When the gods were engaged in the actions of men, it was necessary to subject them to human passions." Moses, in adhering to the Pagan custom, even represents his god subject to human passions without being engaged in their actions ; which is apparently inexcusable. And we are naturally inclined to believe—as Lord Shaftsbury says in his *Characteristics*, that provocation and offence, anger and revenge, jealousy in point of honor or power, love of fame, glory and the like, belong to limited beings, and are necessarily excluded a being which is perfect and universal.

The Rev. H. W. Beecher, in a *Sermon* on the "Immutability of God," says, "Repentance has two meanings. Its original meaning is simply *changing one's course* without any intimation respecting the nature of the change as good or bad." But for God to *change his course*, without any intimation respecting the nature of the change, strikes fatally



at his *immutability*. In holding up Jehovah to be superior to all other gods of antiquity, he says, "The gods of antiquity were subject to fits of wrath, and to the most fitful changes of the most desperate feelings." How applicable this language is to Jehovah, as he is characteristically portrayed by Moses! For a being who would make the request to be let alone that his *fierce wrath might wax hot*, for the purpose of consuming a nation of ignorant people in a moment, must, without controversy, be subject to *fits of the most desperate feeling*. He further says, God's unchangeableness was taught as opposed to the heathen divinities. Heathen gods were but little better than deified despots, holding supremacy for the sake of indulging in all those lusts and appetites in which oriental monarchs indulged." If the unchangeableness of God was *taught* in the Bible, his claim to that quality is flatly contradicted by the scriptural account of his actions. And as Moses acted the part of a religious despot, so he describes the Lord, who never expressed any opposition to his favorite oriental monarchs, indulging to the full extent of their lust and appetites. Solomon was not censured by him for keeping a seraglio of a thousand women to gratify his salacious propensity. But as soon as he became liberal-minded enough to tolerate freedom of religious worship, the mythologist represents him as having fell from a state of grace and favor with God, to that of depravity and wickedness. David's polygamy and concupiscence was not condemned



by the Lord; and if the integrity and moral courage of Nathan had not been sufficient to rebuke him for a combined act of adultery and murder, neither that lecherous monarch or his God would have considered his scandalous and bloody conduct deserving of reproach. For Uriah was a Hittite, and belonged to one of those nations whom the Lord had commanded those atrocious Israelites to destroy, with the privilege of making use of and enjoying their property. Therefore, according to the Hebrew idea of God, David had a right to kill Uriah, and appropriate Bath Sheba to his own use.

Archbishop Fenelon, on the "Existence of God," says, "Men accustomed to meditate on abstract truths, and recur to first principles, recognize the Divinity by the idea of him they find in their own minds." Thus, when Beecher, further says, "All our ideas of God must spring from something that is in our own minds," we readily conclude that he is correct; for the idea that Moses entertained of Jehovah, sprung directly from that source. When he had succeeded in freeing the Israelites from Egyptian servitude, he had the conquest and possession of Canaan in his mind; hence, he then declared the Lord to be *a man of war*, (Ex. 15: 3). Moses also seems to have been very jealous of any others having control over the Israelites, which leads him to say, "Thou shalt worship no other God: for the Lord, whose name is *Jealous*, is a jealous God, (Ex. 34: 14). He often repeats such sentiment respecting the natural quality of his God,

showing that, according to his ideas, jealousy was a prominent trait of the Divine character. When possessed with such a nature, his god must have felt fearfully suspicious concerning the worship of other deities; and consequently of an unhappy state of mind. The idea that God was of such a jealous nature, betrays a belief on the part of the writer, that other gods were considered by him equally genuine, or there would have been no cause for jealousy. Or, if he was so jealous of other gods, why should he make a god of Moses to king Pharaoh? (Ex. 7 : 1). Jealousy being invariably foreign to love, he could not, under that title, be recognized as John's God of *love*. The assumption that Deity was jealous, is parallel in absurdity to that of a man being jealous of his wife when there were no other men in existence! Or, what a ridiculous idea for an Omnipotent being to be jealous of some inanimate lumps of metal or stone! Under such a state of mental derangement, he might be considered a proper subject for a lunatic asylum. Calvin remarks that God's condescension to assume towards his people the character of a husband, does not in that capacity admit of a partner. But in that sense, the people would be equivalent to a partner: and when he had the whole world from which to make a selection for the purpose of having a choice people or partner with whom to communicate, it is rather deplorable that he should select a tribe whose unfaithfulness and infidelity should make it imperative for him to

immediately announce his jealousy in regard to their affections and worship !

Dr. Fairbairn, in his *Typology*, (vol. 2), when discussing the subject of "God's Jealousy," says, "Applied to God, it simply presents Him to our view as the Supreme Jehovah, who has such claims—cannot indeed but claim—He were not the One, Eternal God, but an idol, if He did not claim—the undivided love and homage of His creatures, and who, consequently must resist with holy zeal and indignation every attempt to deprive Him of what is so peculiarly His own. It is to give vividness to this idea, by investing it with the properties of an earthly relation that the Divine affection is so often presented under the special form of jealousy." But why should the *Divine affection* be presented under the similtude of a feeling so much at variance with true love, when love in connection with homage and worship was the object desired? Is it to be supposed that it would add to a woman's affection for her husband, for him to be continually harping on his jealousy of her, when he manifested no more love or regard for her than the Lord did for the Israelites when he wished to destroy them?

The Lord, in divulging his heavenly qualities to Moses, proclaims himself to be—"The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third, and fourth generation," (Ex. 34: 6, 7). How irrational for God to make the

announcement of his *merciful* and *gracious* qualities, accompanied with the declaration that he visited the sins of the fathers upon the children for several successive generations! What *long suffering* disposition did he evince when he commanded Moses to let him alone that his fierce wrath might wax hot, to destroy the whole nation in a moment? Would it not be a great calamity to be born of iniquitous parents under the jurisprudence and judgment of such a *merciful* God as the one described by Moses? John Bunyan, on the *Law*, says, "When God gave it the first time, it was with thunderings and lightnings, with blackness, and darkness, with flame and smoke, and a tearing sound of the trumpet: But when he gave it the second time, it was with a proclamation of his name to be merciful," etc. But suppose Moses had obeyed God, and not interceded for the people, how brilliant his *mercy* would have displayed itself in their universal destruction!

Bishop Warburton—who assumes that Moses studiously avoided giving the Israelites any instruction in regard to the future state on the ground that they were not yet, under that *extraordinary dispensation* of Providence prepared for it,—when on the subject of punishing children for the sins of their fathers, says, "Now that this punishment was to supply the want of a *future state* is evident from hence: Towards the close of this extraordinary economy, when God, by the later prophets, reveals

his purpose of giving a *new Dispensation*, in which a future state of rewards and punishment was to be brought to light, it is there declared in the most express manner that he will abrogate the law of punishing children for the crimes of their parents." (Divine Legation of Moses, vol. 3, c. 5, sec. 5). Instead of such a law supplying the *want of a future state*, as he supposed, its discrepancy only exposed the want of a more genial and humane law for the *present* state; for the Law, (Deut. 24: 16), expressly forbids that children should be put to death for the sins of their fathers, notwithstanding Joshua, (7: 24), had a whole family of innocent children inhumanly put to death for the sin of their father, under the alleged sanction of the Lord. In reply to Spinoza and Tindal—who assert that Jeremiah and Ezekiel, expressly say that the Lord will not suffer such punishment to take place; he infers that they had reference to the Christian Dispensation. But in this view he is refuted, and skepticism fortified, by Dr. Stebbing, who asserts that punishing posterity for the crimes of their fathers is done every day under the present Dispensation. Dr. Jahn, in his "Biblical Archaeology," endeavors to alleviate the incongruity by saying, "We learn, nevertheless, from other places and other considerations, that the punishments which were due to the fathers, were not so much designed to be inflicted in truth on their posterity as to remain to them *warnings*, that if they trod in their father's footsteps, they would expose themselves to the same evil and fearful con-

sequences." But his exegesis does not satisfactorily correspond with the language of the text.

After God had spoken face to face with Moses, as man speaketh unto his friend, (Ex. 33 : 11), this highly favored man requested the privilege of seeing the glory of the Lord. But as far as his curiosity could be gratified was—"I will put thee into a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by ; and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts ; but my face shall not be seen," (Ex. 33 : 22, 23). From this it seems that his feigned deity was a human figure of gigantic proportions, having a hand of sufficient dimension to cover him ; and probably of homely visage, or he would not have declined being seen in the face by his lieutenant. He was evidently possessed of an easy facility for twisting his neck, or walking backwards, otherwise Moses could have obtained sight of his face while he was placing him in the cleft of the rock and covering him with his hand,—which we might suppose had a formidable appearance, as Habakkuk says it had horns coming out of it, (Hab. 3 : 4). If the Lord had then permitted Moses to have a full view of him, we might have been favored with as interesting an account of his personal appearance as Homer relates of Jupiter, with his dark eyebrows and curling hair, his head among the clouds and shaking the heavens with his nod.

Prof. Nicholls, in his "Introduction to the study of the Scriptures," says, "When the Scriptures speak



of God, they sometimes ascribe hands, eyes and feet to him: not that he has any of those members, for God is a Spirit. The meaning is that he has a power to execute all those acts to the effecting of which, by us these parts are instrumental. So we read of the *arm of the Lord*, to express his power," etc. But what these *back parts*, that we read of, which Moses on this occasion was only permitted to see, were instrumental in effecting, he fails to inform us. Dr. W. Smith, says, "He vouchsafed to Moses the outward sign for which he asked, promising to place him in a cleft of the rock, and to hide him while the glory of Jehovah passed by, so that he could only see the train behind him." What nonsense to suppose that Diety would hide Moses in a cleft of a rock, and then pass by with a *train* following him! Such a vague idea as that of the Divinity granting permission to be seen only in the rear parts, is an assumption too superstitious and chimerical to obtain credence in any intelligent mind. And how futile the attempt to elucidate such contradictory language, when the history, (Deut. 34: 10), says Moses and the Lord knew each other *face to face*! And still more unfortunately for these conflicting accounts, the Lord had previously informed Moses that no man should see him and live, (Ex. 33: 20). The truth of this is palpably contradicted by the following,—“Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; also *they saw God*, and did eat and drink, (Ex. 24: 9-11). By this we conclude that the author did



not place a very high estimation on the Lord's reputation for veracity. Archbishop Usher's attempted reconciliation of the difficulty, in saying they saw the *glory* of God, does not meet the exigency of the case.

In contradiction to the Mosaic idea of God's visibility,—an *Article* in the "Confession of Faith," (Presbyterian), says that God is a most pure Spirit, invisible, without body,—parts, passions, immutable," etc. This clearly illustrates the fact that the Jehovah of Moses cannot be recognized in the God of the Christian. For Moses throughout his whole legislative career exhibits God as having been visible, mutable in his nature, subject to passions, and composed of body and parts. According to John, (5: 37), Christ said, "Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape;" and again, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, (John 14: 9). If the Father is *God*, as the Bible teaches, then the writer presents us with a plain contradiction in the language of Christ! Though Jacob is said to have seen God at Peniel, (Gen. 32: 30), and the elders of Israel saw him on the Mount, (Ex. 24: 9, 10), Manoah and his wife saw him when the birth of Sampson was announced, (Judg. 13: 22), Isaiah (6: 1), saw him sitting on a throne; Amos (7: 7), saw him standing on a wall with a plumb line in his hand, and Moses saw him so often that they knew each other face to face; yet the apostle John flatly contradicts them all by saying, "no man hath seen God at any time!" (John 1: 18).

The answer in Hort's *Pantheon*, to the question—"What was the idea entertained concerning Jupiter? is—"The generality of their philosophers supposed Jupiter the greatest of the gods to be the purest air, the æther; and those who looked upon him as an animated god, as one of those men whose illustrious actions have procured them divine honors, contradicted themselves most egregiously." Thus the Pagans believed that their ruling deity Jupiter was invisible; while the Hebrew writers repeatedly speak of their deity Jehovah, as having been seen by them. Thus John, by refuting the Hebrew prophets, gives evidence that by dwelling among Gentiles at Ephesus, he had become indoctrinated in their sentiment on the invisibility of God. But the "Methodist Home Journal," of Jan. 22, 1870, does not seem to have altogether renounced Judaism when it says, "All that we can ever see of God, is what Moses calls his *back parts*."

## CHAPTER IV.

The ancient Hebrews influenced by spiritual visitors, supposed by them to be Deity—The kind of spirit the Jewish God appreciated—Lorenzo Dow—Jung Stilling—Whewell—Pearson—Kant, and his Philosophy—Ashley—Philosophy of Aristotle—Lord Bacon—Newton—McCosh—Coleridge—Harris—Solomon—Stanley—Averroes—Martineau—Zuignlius—Protogoras—Horne—View of God in connection with the history of Jephthah—Josephus—Smith—Kitto—Chrysostom—Calnet—Samson and Saul—Romulus—Wilson—Psalmist, etc.

The evidence is incontrovertible that those ancient enthusiastically religious Jews were occasionally the subjects of ophthalmic manifestations or visions, in which angelic visitors appeared, by whom they were influenced and guided in their course of life; and which was accepted and believed in by them to be Deity. When Joshua was about to attempt the conquest of Canaan—in anticipation of enjoying the land as an inheritance, as is alleged to have been promised, he saw a spiritual apparition of a man standing with a drawn sword in his hand, who declared himself to be Captain of the Lord's hosts, (Josh. 5: 13, 14.) This gave him encouragement that he would be successful in his enterprise; for which he called him his Lord, and fell down and worshipped him. This may seem typical of the peaceful Gospel Dispensation; for when the convicted sinner is struggling for a conquest over his natu-

ral condition, for the purpose of obtaining an eternal inheritance in the salvation of his soul, some congenial (invisible) spirit sympathetically gives him assurance that through repentance and faith in Christ, his sins are pardoned, and he made an inheritor of eternal happiness in heaven, according to the promise. He then declares that he has the evidence within him that God has given him a clear title to everlasting mansions in the skies, and worship him in consequence as an invisible spirit. But it is evident that this happy state of spiritual feeling is not wrought by the deity of Moses, from the fact that he did not enjoin repentance in the Law, or acknowledge such a doctrine as the forgiveness of sins. Repentance was a peculiarity of the prophetic age, and salvation as its consequence, that of the gospel Dispensation.

The *Religio Philosophical Journal*, on the "Spiritualism of the Bible," says, "The Lord, so often spoken of in the Bible, was the leader of a band of spirits who were deeply interested in the affairs of earth, and who wished to assist the residents thereof by the diffusion of a healthy sentiment among them. God was the leader of a higher band, to whose guidance the affairs of earth was submitted. God the infinite never spoke to mortals in the manner designated in the Bible, and never will . . . . Lord and God are only ministering spirits, the leaders of angelic circles, the supervisors of the affairs of men, to a certain degree, and who never desire mortals to ascribe those miraculous powers

to them, which are so often held forth in the Bible." We might suppose that it was diametrically at variance with God's desire for the Hebrew cosmogonist to couple his name with that of the Lord in the second chapter of Genesis, and under their united names give a different account of their miraculous creation, to be palmed off on future generations as an infallible record of the beginning.

The different kind of spirit that actuated Moses, from that which characterized the life and teaching of Jesus, is shown by the hasty and impatient feeling he evinced when he prayed for the Lord to kill him out of hand. Such a prayer from a Christian would be considered sufficient proof of insanity. Though the Lord did not answer his prayer, yet it seems to have been acceptable to him, for he then told Moses to gather seventy of the elders of Israel together, and bring them to the tabernacle, and he would come down and talk with him, and take of the *spirit* that was upon him, and put it on them, (Num. 11: 15-17). After he had *come down* and infused this spirit into them, they commenced what was called *prophesying*, at which two of them continued so long in the camp, that Joshua protested against it as a public nuisance, and made petition to Moses for the purpose of having it discontinued (Num. 11: 28).

The prophet Mecaiah informs us of another kind of *spirit* that appears to have been held in high estimation by the Lord—according to the notions of the writer—termed a *lying* spirit: which he appa-

rently kept in heaven for the coadjutant purpose of assisting him in accomplishing such perplexing duties as the writer supposed him to be incapable of performing himself. The prophet represents the Lord as being embarrassed to know what course to pursue in order to get rid of a certain king, whose conduct on earth was a great annoyance to him. After hearing the plans and suggestions of his heavenly subjects in regard to the best mode of procedure, he rejected all their counsel, and contrary to any reasonable idea of a God of truth, accepted the proposition of a *lying spirit* that presented himself on the occasion. His scheme for conducting the affair was so much in conformity with the Lord's idea of success, that he forthwith commissioned him to go forth and execute his purposes on earth, by instilling lies into the mouths of a certain class of prophets, (1 Kings 22: 19-23). Such measures we might suppose equivalent to placing a premium on lying; which would not only have the pernicious effect of depreciating the moral value of truth, but would in all probability give offence to the Devil for usurping his peculiar prerogative!

Lorenzo Dow, in giving this incongruity a passing notice, says that the reason why the heavenly host declined to persuade Ahab, was, "Because it was contrary to the inclination of a good angel to go on a bad errand." But such an exposition is no elucidation to the theological perplexity, inasmuch as it exhibits God soliciting assistance in a mischievous cause. By this interpretation he does not



show any higher conception of God's wisdom and perfection, than he expressed of his omnipotence, when, in his "Journey from Babylon to Jerusalem," he says, "Benhadad, Agag, and the Canaanites lived longer than God intended they should." If God could not superintend and conduct the concerns of this world agreeable with his will and pleasure without the aid of *lying spirit*, mankind would have no reason to complain if were to send in his resignation, and cease making a mockery of it; and let the world experiment whether the laws of Nature would not operate equally satisfactory to humanity without the alleged control of such an assumed God as that! The human family would no doubt soon feel convinced of the truth of Dr. Plumer's remark, that the world may as well be without a God, as to have one who is incompetent to rule it.

Dr. Jung-Stilling, in assailing the system of *Optimism*, in his "Pneumatology," says. "If God has no influence over the world, we have consequently nothing to do with him, and it is very immaterial to us whether there be any God or not; for the world may have existed from all eternity, and have been its own God! See my dear readers, to what monstrous ideas human reason leads, when left to itself!" But when we take into consideration the incompetency displayed by the Mosaic God to govern the world, and that the disorder, distraction and confusion which reigns in its moral government is in such serious conflict with the idea that



it is under the control of an *Almighty* being of such perfection and holiness as the Lord is said to be, we are inclined to wonder whether a belief in the earth's eternal existence—acting through its own concreated powers, is any more *monstrous* than the supposition that a personal God created himself, or was self-existent from eternity, and less than six thousand years ago awoke up from a state of inactivity and formed the universe—including the earth and the human beings who inhabit it—with the foreknowledge of condemning the great portion of them to eternal misery; and finally smashing up the whole concern and consuming it, as our theology teaches! We are almost forced to the conclusion that the latter idea looks *monstrous*, viewed from what standpoint of belief you please.

Though Dr. S. Clarke ridiculed the theory of DesCartes, that the world might have been formed by the necessary laws of motion, yet he could produce no more logical evidence in defence of a personal and self-existing God as its Creator, than the inference that it was an absolute necessity existing in the nature of the thing. Professor Whewell, on the "Indications of the Creator," says, "Our minds cannot be satisfied with a series of successive, dependent causes and effects, without something first and independent." But there lies the difficulty in the philosophical mind, to arrive at any degree of satisfaction on that point. The Rev. T. Pearson, says, "The fate of Clarke's pretended demonstration, and the result, in so far as theology is con-

cerned, of the transcendental reasoning of the continental philosophers, show the futility of attempting to rise up to the height of the great argument for the existence of God on the *a priori* method alone." And further remarks that "Clarke found it necessary to stoop to the argument *a posteriori*, and thereby acknowledged the failure of attempting to reason exclusively *a priori*." What philosopher acknowledges his success in *stooping* to the argument *a posteriori*? For a personal God to exist through absolute necessity involved in the nature of the thing, is no more than parallel in logic with the reasoning of Immanuel Kant—founder of the transcendental school of philosophy, and originator of that system of rationalism which has shaped itself in such insidious form in Germany—who, in the language of Howitt, abandoned in his scheme for the demonstration of the existence of Deity, all proofs drawn from ontology, cosmogony and physico-theology; and based his faith in God as a practical and moral necessity. And by stripping away all historic proof of His existence, reduced Him to a mere abstract idea, a subjective conception of pure reason.

It is said that a French Atheist in addressing his audience once exclaimed—"Yes, gentlemen, I am just as sure there is no God, as I am that Homer was a fool!" Though evidence is wanting to prove Homer a fool, yet in the face of such ontological difficulties as the rationalist, pantheist, and trans-

cientalist is confronted with in arriving at an adequate conception of God, they do not assume to such unwarrantable assurance in expressing their views in relation to Divinity.

The Rev. R. K. Ashley, in his "Christianity, in its Idea and Development," says: "The proposition of an atheistical heart or intellect is, *There is no God*. The inference from this is, that man is supreme; and the conclusion, that he may proceed to act upon his sole individual law or desire." But if man did not take upon himself to frame laws for his own civil government, what would the so-called law of God amount to? In relation to the Jews, to whom only it is assumed that God revealed<sup>1</sup> his moral and ceremonial law, he confesses that they as a nation, have been politically weak. "The history of that people," says he, "is a constant series of irrational action, recited by the tongue of inspiration, or written in blood with a willow pen." The civil and political inference then is, that civilized people, such as lived in Egypt before the time of Moses, could have made as useful laws, and given a more creditable account of their obedience thereto, than Moses or the Jews wrote of themselves, without the *inspired* effusions of such a God as that which caused their history to be "written in blood with a willow pen." And they could no doubt have accomplished it on more scientific and philosophical principles than was done by those people, whom Apion states (according to

Josephus) were driven out of Egypt on account of being a nuisance in the kingdom.

Lord Bacon says, "Undoubtedly a superficial tincture of philosophy may incline the mind to atheism, yet a further knowledge brings it back to religion. For on the threshold of philosophy, where second causes appear to absorb the attention, some oblivion of the highest cause may ensue; but when the mind goes deeper, and sees the dependence of causes, and the works of Providence, it will easily perceive, according to the mythology of the poets, that the upper link of Nature's chain is fastened to Jupiter's throne." Though in his *Novum Organum*, (b. 1, aph. 63), he charges Aristotle with corrupting natural philosophy by *logic*, yet he does not hold him equally responsible for contaminating natural theology with *reason*, when he says, "Aristotle had no need of a God, after having impregnated Nature with final causes, and laid it down that Nature does nothing in vain; always obtaining her ends when obstacles are removed." (Advancement of Learning b. 3, c. 4).

Sir Isaac Newton, in stating that the philosophers say that Nature does nothing in vain, and more is in vain when less will serve, apparently endorses Aristotelian sentiment by saying, "We are to admit no more causes for natural things, than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearance;" on the ground that Nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes, (Principia, vol. 2, b. 3). And Dr. McCosh—

Professor of Logic and Metaphysics, Queens College, Belfast, on the *Infinite*, in his "Intuitions of the Mind," remarks that he has but little to say against the sentiment expressed by Newton, that God constituted time and space.

Bacon further says, "When Democritus and Epicurus advanced their atoms, they were thus far tolerated by some, but when they asserted the fabric of all things to be raised by a fortuitous concourse of those atoms, without the help of mind they became universally ridiculous. So far are physical causes from drawing men from God and Providence, that on the contrary, the philosophers employed in discovering them can find no rest, but by flying to God or Providence at last." His view is apparently confirmed by the language of Condorcet, when he exclaimed—"How marvellous to behold Voltaire contending with Pascal for the existence of God!" From which it appears to be as difficult for a philosophical atheist to deny the reality of *God*, as it is for an advocate of the Mosaic idea of Deity to convince a reasonable and unbiassed mind that a *true* God would only reveal himself to one tribe or nation of his human creatures.

In regard to the philosophy of Aristotle, Dr. Harris says, "While the earth was resounding with Alexander's exploits, Aristotle, his tutor, was silently achieving the conquest of the human mind. The Macedonian empire was soon dismembered and extinct; but the mental empire of the philosopher

continued vigorous and entire for more than two thousand years, moulding opinions, affecting creeds, indirectly guiding the popular will;" etc. And it might be added, as vigorous and influential now as ever; proving the truth of the old adage that the pen is mightier than the sword. It has been asserted that when Alexander took Jerusalem, he procured the writings of Solomon and sent them to Aristotle, from which he derived all that was valuable in his philosophy. If such were the case it would establish the belief that Solomon discarded the Mosaic idea of God. But as there was no marked improvement in Aristotelian philosophy subsequent to that event, and its original merit so much superior to the *wisdom* of Solomon—who says that a man has no pre-eminence over a beast, (Ecc. 3: 19) that the claim is left without either internal or external evidence to sustain it.

"Even in England," says Dr. Stanley—Dean of Westminster, "the doubters and scoffers among the half educated mechanics often take refuge under the authority of Solomon, and make the book of Ecclesiastes alternately the sanction of their own unbelief." And Abulfaragius, in the 12th century, undoubtedly drew from that book his melancholy representation of Solomon's sentiment in harmony with the skepticism of Empedocles.

Dr. Dwight infers that the difficulty in the mind of Aristotle was, that the work of creation was so great as to make it impossible for any personal God to accomplish. But Dr. McCosh, on *Natural*



*Theology*, in his "Defence of Fundamental Truth," says, "Even Aristotle, cold though he be in his references to divine subjects, falls back on God as the principle and ground of all things." Thus it does not appear that he in words really denied the existence of God, but supposed the universe to have existed from all eternity, apparently independent of any wisdom or foresight of a personal creator. He seems to have supposed God to be the mainspring of the whole machine, and therefore properly a constituent part of it, employed in some inexplicable manner in communicating motion to it.

Bishop Horne says, "This confounding God and created nature together is the essence of Paganism, and the foundation of all the errors in the Heathen and Christian world." It may be the *essence* of Paganism and quintessence of philosophy, but it does not necessarily follow that it is the foundation of all the errors in the world; for it is clear from the records of antiquity, that the Grecians before the time of Christ—however various and conflicting their views in relation to Deity may have been, were, through the literary teaching of their poets, more refined than the Jews, through the revelation of Moses and the prophets,—whose narrow ideas of a personal God is still adhered to by the Christian Church. Consequently, as Howitt says, the pride of Greek philosophy could not stoop to Hebrew revelation.

But the imperial edict of Constantine in the early part of the fourth century, suppressing all



religious sentiment that militated against the dogmas of Christianity—in conjunction with the general results of that semi-barbarous condition into which Christendom subsequently retrograded, almost proved fatal to Greek philosophy. Averroes—an Arabian free-thinker of Andalusian birth, at length revived it in the 12th century; and owing to the modern declension of religious superstition and fanatical despotism, the intellectual mind is now taking hold on religio-philosophical views more in consistency with the Stoic philosophy of the Grecian sages.

Prof. Baring Gould says, "St. Thomas Aquinas filled his pitcher at the fountain of Stagyra, and poured it forth in theological wine: then Aristotle was countenanced;" etc.

The Rev. J. Martineau—Professor in Manchester College, London—and acknowledged to be one of the most profound thinkers and brilliant writers of the present century, when treating on "Nature and God,"—after stating that the traditional cosmogony of Moses has been knocked to pieces by the geological hammer, makes the inquiry—"Who that has any intellectual image of our modern Kosmos would think it for the 'glory of God' to have back again the three-storied or seven-storied structure, in which the Hebrew and early Christian imagination found room and time for everything, earthly, develish and divine? Everything has turned out grander in the reality than the pre-conception." But everything has not turned out

*grander* than the Greek preconception; for the Hellenic thinkers never could contain or comprehend their theological and cosmogonical views in such a narrow and low structure as that in which the Jewish and early Christian mind was domiciled. And in the expansion of the Jewish and Christian intellect, the mind naturally takes hold on the scientific and philosophical views advanced by the schools of Greece.

Chambers, in *Popular Encyclopædia*, gives attestation to the advanced state of Grecian learning, when he says, "But science has taught us that the discoveries of Copernicus and Sir Isaac Newton, have established the truth suggested by Pythagoras upwards of 2000 years before the time of either of them."

Martineau, when criticising Sir. W. Hamilton's *Philosophy*, (vol. 2, of his essays), says, "Plato was the blossom of the pure Hellenic mind in its fullest bloom,—which is only to be seen on its native soil, Aristotle is the useful fruit, which may be gathered for the commerce of thought, and exported to every land." This is paying as high a compliment to Grecian philosophy as the reformer Zuinglius gives to Grecian divinity when he says, "If you find in Plato or Pythagoras something deriving its origin from the source of truth, you are not to despise it because a mortal penned it. I venture even to call that divine, which is borrowed from the Heathens, so far as it is holy, tends to piety," etc.

Coleridge, when tracing the "Law of Association" from Aristotle to Hartley, in his *Biographia Literaria*, says that it remains, therefore, for me to state wherein Hartley differs from Aristotle; then, to exhibit the ground of my conviction that he differed only to err," etc.

A writer in the Presbyterian *Quarterly Review*, when commenting on Aristotle, says, "He was confessedly master of Logic, and subsequent philosophers have only reproduced, expounded or expanded on his principles." Professor Tagert, when reviewing Kant in his "Philosophy of Locke," endeavors to show what injustice the Grecian sage has suffered at the hands of the German critic. Rapin sums up the philosophy of Aristotle by saying, "he only thinks to think justly." And as high as we prize the learning, science, and critical spirit of the present day, it is a pertinent question whether this literary and so-called enlightened age, has furnished anything new, or superior to the metaphysics and moral ethics of Grecian literature two thousand years ago. An agreement of sentiment in relation to Divinity, it is admitted did not prevail in the Hellenic schools, neither can contemplative and intellectual minds of the present day agree in their peculiar views concerning Deity.

Protagoras, in one of his books, says, "Owing to the weakness of the human understanding, the shortness of life, and many other causes, we are prevented from determining whether the Gods have an actual existence or not." Nevertheless he de-

clared that virtue was taught by all mankind. Diagoras openly declared a disbelief in Deity ; for which the Rev. J. Pearson in his *Prize Essay* on "Infidelity," says he was marked out from the minds of the ancient world as having made an unenviable attainment. Alger, in his "History of the Future Life," says, "It would take a whole volume instead of a chapter to set forth the multifarious contrasting tenets of the Greek philosophers from the age of Pherecydes to Jamblichus in relation to future existence ;" and an equal amount of literary labor would also be required to convey an adequate idea of their conflicting views concerning the Divine existence.

The influence that philosophy and criticism are exerting on the religious feeling of the present day, is shown by Martineau when on "Personal Influences on our Present Theology" by saying, "To these three movements, distinguished by the names of Newman, Coleridge, and Carlyle, must mainly be ascribed the altered spirit, in regard to religion, prevading the young intellect of England." Which seems to refute the assertion of Macaulay, that religion is not a progressive science. The language of H. W. Beecher on the "Decadence of Christianity," that "Whether Christianity has run through its period of power, and is to fall back, as the Mosaic economy did, is now a question much pondered and discussed ;" looks portentous in regard to old theology, and gives indication that a general revolution in the religious world is approaching.

In reviewing the history of the Hebrew nation in relation to their ideas of Divinity, we find by the account given concerning the Lord's ineffectual effort to control the Israelites in their religious worship during the time of Jephthah, that neither omnipotence, truth, or immutability were considered by the writer to be essential attributes of Deity. Jephthah may be considered half heathen at best—being the illegitimate son of a harlot, cast out by his father's family, and compelled to take refuge in the land of Tob, on the Syrian frontier; when he seems to have become a leader of banditti. (Judge 11: 3). He was a man, who, according to the Law, was not permitted to enter into the congregation of the Lord, even to the tenth generation. (Deut. 23: 2). Yet according to the history, the Lord made no objection to him as the leader of his people, and accepted him in open defiance of his Law, denying such unlawful issue his favor.

After his expulsion, the Israelites soon found themselves in a distressed condition from the oppression they were receiving at the hands of the Philistines and Ammonites. They cried to their god for deliverance, but he replied that he had repeatedly delivered them, and that they had forsaken him and served other gods—"Wherefore" says he, "I will deliver you no more; go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen." (Judge 10: 13, 14). Here we have a special command from their god for the practice of what is termed *idolatry*! If they did not then go at worshipping other gods, they

were liable to censure for the sin of disobedience, and again subject to the wrath of their tutelar God Jehovah. Thus in despair of receiving martial aid from him, they went in search of heathenized Jephthah—who appears to have become famous as a warrior; for Josephus says he was maintaining an army at his own expense. Then, after this free-booter had made a Heathen vow unto the Lord—which Josephus says he accordingly performed, and which the language of the Bible plainly implies—though expositors generally twist the subject so as to evade a Pagan sacrifice—the historian shows God to have been regardless of his declaration, (I will deliver you no more,) and delivers them as usual; and that through the instrumentality of a man well indoctrinated and practiced in Paganism.

In regard to the sacrifice of his daughter, Prof. Stackhouse in his “History of the Bible” seems to doubt whether a life of celibacy could have been considered such an affliction as to require the daughters of Israel to lament her loss four times a year. And Dr. W. Smith in admitting a literal sacrifice, says that the words can leave no possible doubt of her fate. As a palliation for the crime, he further says, “It should be remembered that Jephthah was a rude Gilleadite, whose spirit had become hardened by his previous life as a free-booter.” But the fact should likewise be *remembered* that the *spirit of the Lord* came upon him shortly before taking the Heathen vow! As he



had achieved a successful war under its influence, it without doubt remained on him when he performed the sacrifice.

Dr. Kitto in his *Cyclopædia*, also supposes that she was really sacrificed as a burnt offering, and to have been offered on some altar beyond Jordan. For it to have taken place at the tabernacle, and the high priest to have been the sacrificer, as some Jewish writers infer, he thinks would have been outrageously contrary to the probabilities of the case. But if it was acceptable to the Lord, why should it not have taken place where his other acceptable sacrifices were offered? Chrysostom infers that the Lord accepted, or suffered this sacrifice to take place for the purpose of restraining those who might be too easily induced to make such promises.

The vow of Pagan Romulus—founder of Rome, that if he conquered Acron, king of the Ceninenses, (in a war induced by the rape of the Sabine virgins) he would dedicate the arms of his adversary to Jupiter, bears no comparison in point of heathenism to the inhuman and reckless vow of Jephthah, as instigated by the spirit of the Lord. And his treatment of the captives, in admitting them to an equal right with Roman citizens, was much more in consistency with humanity and civilization than the Israelite custom of slaughtering or enslaving them. Though Jephthah's act of human immolation is said to have its parallel in contemporaneous Grecian history, in the case of Agamemnon



sacrificing his daughter Iphigenia, before engaging in the Trojan war; yet which mythic tragedy is parent of the other, we have no means of ascertaining. Calmet thinks that the Grecian narrative is a fable, borrowed from the Hebrew fact. If such be the case, it is all the better for Greek character, for such rude and barbarous transactions sound much better in fiction than they appear in fact.

The legend of Samson's intercourse with the Philistines, furnishes another illustration of the conduct of those Hebrew rulers when actuated by what the mythologist terms the *spirit of the Lord*. When he lost his wager, the spirit of the Lord came upon him, and under its "benign" influence he went and killed thirty men to get the clothing off their bodies to pay his debt! (Judg. 14: 19). Paul says, where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. But *liberty* for a man to make such murderous havoc among unoffending citizens, to liquidate a forfeited pledge, is running to a "bloody" extreme with it. The spirit of the Lord also came upon king Saul when he heard of the intended invasion of his kingdom by the Ammonites; whereby his anger became so greatly kindled that he took a yoke of oxen and hewed them to pieces! (1. Sam. 11: 6, 7).

The spirit of the Lord, under the old Jewish economy was significant of conquest and worldly aggrandizement; but under the gospel dispensation it conveyed the idea of submission, gentleness, and charity. What was under the Mosaic dispensation considered the spirit of the Lord, was under apos-

tolie discipline treated as the spirit of the Devil. As the Hebrew historian has the Lord and Satan theologically confounded, (2 Sam. 24: 1, and 1 Chron. 21: 1), it is doubtful whether they were sensible of any difference. The Persian reformer Manicheus, perhaps understood the case better, when he said that the Jews were the most faithful subjects over whom Satan ever reigned.

Judge Jephthah informed the Ammonites that the Israelites would possess such lands as their god Jehovah gave them, on the same principle that the Ammonites claimed those lands which their god Chemosh gave them, (Judg. 11: 24). From this we plainly perceive that he supposed the victories which the Ammonites had previously obtained over the Israelites to be in consequence of Chemosh prevailing over Jehovah: both of which were merely mythological names for the same Deity. For these Ammonites were the descendants of Lot, who worshipped God according to the Abrahamic idea, and still adored the same deity that the Israelites did, under a more ancient title, and still retaining the popular symbolical form of worship which Moses made such an indefatigable effort to abolish, after he claimed to have received a revelation of the new name *Jehovah*.

By an impartial observation of this portion of Hebrew history, it becomes transparent to the reader, that the narrative of Jephthah's political and religious career—with his conduct sanctioned by the

Mosaic idea of God, confounds Israelite worship with that of Paganism.

Henry Bristow Wilson, B. D., says, "In respect to a state religion, Jew and Gentile are more alike than has been thought. . . . Constantly the title occurs in the Hebrew scriptures of the Lord's people, with appeals to Jehovah as their Supreme Governor, Protector, and Judge. And so it is with the Polytheistic nations. They are the offspring of the gods. The deities are their guides and their guardians, the authors of their laws and customs. Their worship is interwoven with the whole course of political and social life. But it is very clear to unprejudiced persons, that the conceptions which the Hebrews formed of Jehovah, though far superior to the conceptions embodied by any other national religion, were obscured by figurative representations of him in accordance with the character of his worshippers," (Essays and Reviews).

The Psalmist, (86: 8), says, "Among the gods there is none like unto thee O Lord." Thus it is plain from the language that he believed in the existence of a plurality of deities, though entertaining a national and biased preference for the Mosaic idea; which, as Wilson says, was obscured by figurative representations of his assumed people. He also says, "The Lord judgeth among the gods," (Ps. 82: 1). According to the religious enthusiasm peculiar to the Israelites, he speaks of his god as being possessed with qualities excelling all other gods in judicial capacity. Could it be possible for him to

adopt such a frivolous notion as to believe that an Omnipotent being would spend his time in exercising judgeship among some insignificant graven images, with which such a thing as accountability was impossible? Or could he be so stupid as to suppose that lifeless lumps of metal constituted deities? Yet such an insult to human intelligence seems to be confirmed by the language of the writer when he says, "Confounded be all they who serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him all ye gods," (Ps. 97: 7). Thus he either exhorts idols and images to worship God, or believed in the existence of intelligent divinities besides Jehovah. Bishop M'Ilvaine, in his ninth *Lecture* on the "Evidences of Christianity," says, "It never was imagined by any description of Pagans that all other forms of religion were not as good, for the people observing them, as theirs was for them; or that any dictate of kindness or common sense should lead them to attempt the subversion of the gods of their neighbors, for the sake of establishing their own in their stead." As the Israelites, according to the instruction of their lawgiver, contended that their ideas alone were right, while they were engaged in plundering and destroying weaker nations who did not think and worship as they did, that fact furnishes a striking contrast between Jewish bigotry in connection with their aggressive policy, and the generosity and sociality of Paganism.

## CHAPTER V.

Douglass on the Hindoo faculty—Christian Missionaries and Brahmin Priests—Hodge—Bhagvat Geta—Images not supposed to be deities by the Heathen—Burmese worship—Vedas—Calvin—Gaudama—Christian worship contrasted with Paganism—Abbe Dubois—Vishnu—Warburton on Christian Missions—Brainard—Wesley—Miller—Philosophy of Hegel and Strauss—Darwin—Various opinions of God—Beecher—The deity, and death of Christ—Lynch and the Mahometan—Death of Pan—Hodge's Review of Bushnell—Chinese view of Deity—African idea of God and future life—Addison—The worship of a Supreme Being prevalent among all the Polytheistic nations of Antiquity—Livingstone—Minutius Felix—Arnobius—Cudworth—Salkeld—Haven—Plutarch—Cicero—Turnbull—Fox—Alexandrinus—Gould—Dwight—Pope.

The Rev. F. A. Douglass, of the Teloogoo Mission, says, that the Hindoo mythology enumerates 3,300,000 gods; which he asserts "mild doctrine and morality will not destroy." And these being subject to a supreme One, renders their faith similar to that of the patriarch Abraham, who, according to Josephus did not disbelieve in minor gods, controlled by a superior one. "These people," says Douglass, "have men among them who can sift Butler's *Analogy*, and grasp such works as Edwards on the *Will*, without need of explanation." He further says, "The Hindoo mind is compact, logical, discriminating and clear; one that can create;" etc. Their mental *creative* talent is

amply sustained by the number of demi-gods their prolific conceptions have brought into nominal existence, and greatly excels the Anglo-Saxon mind in "divine" productiveness. Though perhaps not surpassing the literary genius of a Rev. Mr. Drake, that Rogers, on "Pulpit Eloquence," makes some remarks on; who divided his Sermon into one hundred and seventy parts, which only embraced those portions which contained the substance and marrow of the subject, passing by sundry useful points, queries, solutions, etc!

The reasoning faculty of the Hindoo is shown by the following argument between a Christian missionary and a Brahmin priest; quoted from *Life in India*, published by the "American Sunday-school Union." The Brahmin maintained that he constituted a portion of God; which the Christian attempted to refute by inquiring how he could be a part of God, when he was sinful and God holy? His interrogation was replied to on the part of the priest by saying, "Oh! I see you need a little more intellect in your head before you can argue with us. God is fire—the purest element in creation. But if you throw filth upon it, a bad odor will arise: this is not the fault of the fire, but of that which is thrown upon it. Thus God in me is perfectly pure, but he is surrounded by matter (that is, the material body,) he does not desire sin, he hates it; but sin arises from matter."

The Apostle Paul expresses his belief in a multiplicity of gods when he declares that there are

gods many, (1 Cor. 8 : 5). Dr. Hodge—Professor of divinity in the Theological Seminary, Princeton ; in commenting on the apparent discrepancy between this and the preceding verse, says, “The apparent contradiction between saying, *there is no idol in the world*, and saying *there are gods many*, is easily removed. The meaning is, there is no such being in the universe as Jupiter or Mars ; for although there is a multitude of supernatural beings called gods and lords, not only by the heathen, but also in scripture ; yet there are no such beings as the heathen imagine. The whole heathen mythology is a fable, the work of imagination.” Admitting that it is a fable, and the work of imagination, what else can we make of the Jewish and Christian theologies or mythologies but the product of *imagination* ? There is not a shadow of tangible evidence that either theology or mythology is founded upon fact, for the whole system of human worship necessarily rests on imagination. To the Polytheistic nations there was a plurality of deities to worship, because they believed that a multitude of such beings existed ; while to the Monotheistic Jews and Christians there is but *one* God to serve, because they believe in no more. And it would have been as impossible for Moses, Isaiah, or Paul to have demonstrated the existence of Jehovah to other nations, as it would have been for Numa or Lysurgus to have proved the reality of Jupiter or Apollo to the satisfaction of Jews or Christians. The “theological” fact, that *believing* a thing to be so, makes it true to the be-



liever, is confirmed by the testimony of Paul in his instructions to the Romans concerning cleanliness in meats, when he says, "To him that esteemeth a thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean."

A passage concerning Deity in the *Bhagvat Geta* one of the sacred books of India, written centuries before the Christian era, reads as follows. "He that serveth other Gods with a full belief in doing so, involuntarily worships Me. I am He that partaketh of all worship, and am their reward." If such liberal sentiment in regard to divine worship had been taught and practiced among Jews and Christians, from the time of Moses to the present day, the vast amount of fanatical persecution and bloodshed on account of religion that has stained the history of past ages, induced by the partial and jealous idea of Divinity promulgated by the Sinai lawgiver—and believed in to the everlasting disgrace of Judaism and Christianity, would have been averted.

The Lystrians, (Acts 14: 11), in saying that the gods had come down to them in the likeness of men, shows that they did not believe the symbols or images used by them in worship to be real deities. Their belief in regard to the location of the gods was the same as that of the Jews respecting Jehovah—that they dwelt above. And in their intention of doing homage to Paul and Barnabas, they displayed no greater ignorance of Deity, or idolatrous proclivity than John did, when he fell down

to worship a person who declared himself to be his fellow servant. (Rev. 19: 10).

In an argument between a Christian missionary and an Indian priest, concerning idolatry, the latter in its defence said—"You are laboring under a mistaken idea that we worship the stone. Are we fools? do we not know that stone is stone, and God is God? Idiots may worship stone, or blocks—we do not. But where is God? will you show him to us? Who can see him? How then shall the unthinking and untaught mass worship him whom they see not? The idea of an unseen intangible God is too abstract for them; they cannot grasp it. Devotion will die unless we give the vulgar mind something actual in which to rest. The mind is concentrated on this, and thence ascends to God." (Life in India).

Renan, in his "Religious History and Criticism on the People of Israel," says, "Monotheism in the world has been the work of Semitic apostles, in this sense, that previous to and apart from the action of Judaism, Christianity, and Islamism, the worship of the only and supreme God never was clearly comprehended by the multitude . . . India, which has thought with so much originality and depth, has not to this day arrived at it." And it might be further added, that they never will arrive at it until a more generous way of comprehending it is conceived than the unreasonable idea, taught by the Hebrew legislator.

The following quotation from the *Vedas*, one of

the sacred books of India—the date of which is coeval with the law of Moses, throws important light on the Hindoo conception of Deity. “The vulgar look for gods in water, the ignorant think they reside in wood, brick and stone; men of more extensive knowledge seek them in the celestial orbs; but wise men worship the universal Soul. For there is but one living and true God, everlasting, and without parts or passions, of infinite power, wisdom and goodness; the Maker and Preserver of all things. But his attributes cannot be known by finite beings.”

Though the Editor of the *New York Tribune*, (weekly), May 4, 1870, thinks it probable that the Vedas are older than the Hebrew scriptures, yet he will not admit the truth of what Louis Jacolloit—with the assistance of Sir Wm. Jones’ investigations, attempts to prove—that our Bible is merely a rehash of those ancient Hindoo records.

That Christendom was equally idolatrous with Paganism, previous to the Protestant reformation, is shown by the following extract from Calvin’s “Farewell to the Ministers of Geneva.” “When I first came to this church I found almost nothing in it. They had preaching and that was all. They would look out for idols it is true, and they burned them,” etc. (Vol. 3 of his Letters).

A native of Burmah—to whose remarks in addressing a Christian audience respecting the worship of his country, our attention was recently called—after giving the names of four different *in-*

*carnated* Gods, that according to their mythology had appeared on earth since the earliest history; and the name of one, who, according to their prophecy was yet to come; said that the last one who had fulfilled his earthly mission was *Gaudama*—he having appeared six hundred years before Christ; and was the God now worshipped among them. After giving some account of his life and manner of death, as traditionally handed down to them, he held up to view what appeared to be a piece of sculptured marble, in imitation of a man, and said that was his image used in worship. But they did not believe that model of him to be *Gaudama*—their deity, any more than we would believe a chiseled piece of stone representing Jesus, would constitute our incarnate god *Christ*; who has been theologically incorporated into the Hebrew god *Jehovah*, though mystically retaining his distinct personality, with the indwelling fulness of the Godhead bodily! (Col. 2: 9.)

The theogony and lineage of the Hebrew god has not been traditionally handed down,—but judging from the size of his hand with which he covered Moses in a cleft of the rock, we are justifiable in supposing that he must have been much larger *bodied* than the Christian's god, *Jesus Christ*, and whose *fulness*, or greater size, in a practical and matter-of-fact age, makes it a subject of considerable difficulty to get him satisfactorily comprehended in a deity of human size, in agreement with Paul's mystical hypothesis. But it has been ac-

complished on the same principle that a war-god has been blended into a peaceful one; which the ingenuity of Christian metaphysics has so successfully achieved. Yet according to Christ's explanation of the resurrection to the Sadducees, (Luke 20: 37, 38), the Hebrew god was only the god of the *living*; when Paul informs us that Christ arose, and revived, that he might be Lord of the *dead* likewise! (Rom. 14: 9.)

One god at a time appears to have been sufficient for Burmese worship, while it is considered essential for Christians to have three personal gods to insure them a passport to heaven. And to avoid the obloquy of being stigmatized for idolatry without the use of images, they have, by an inexplicable theological contrivance, got them syllogistically consolidated into one. We make no use of any symbolical representations of Deity, because of the obvious futility of such a custom; though if we had been trained to it by early education, we could have worshipped God with as much sincerity and devotion with them, as we do without, notwithstanding the wickedness of so doing as declared by the originator of our system of worship. As the use of images in worship is merely parallel to child's play, there can be nothing offensive in it to Deity.

Though the Ephesians, (Acts 19: 35), in doing homage to the image that according to their mythology fell down from Jupiter, did not believe that to be their god *Jupiter* himself, yet they were

doubtless as well assured in their minds that it was dropped by him to the earth for the purpose of using in worship, as the Israelites were that a command was written by the finger of God on a table of stone forbidding the use of such things. If the Ephesian account of the fall and reception of that image had not long since fell a victim to the ravages of time, we would without doubt have been interested with as marvellous a narrative of its presentation to the people and instructions for worship, as we have of the lawgiving on Sinai in opposition to idolatry or symbol worship. The Ephesian mode of worship—including the services connected with the temple of Diana, was as indisputably settled in the minds of those people to be in accordance with divine requirements, as the Jews were that their form of worship and tabernacle ceremonies were divinely ordained by Jehovah,—attested by the language of the town clerk when he said that they could not be spoken against.

A sect among the Indians, called *Jainas*—whose religion is tinctured with the Burmese theology, seem to entertain ideas of Deity more exalted in some respects than Christians. A missionary in writing of them, says, "They reject the religious books of the Brahmins, the incarnation of the god *Vishnu*, and the use of animals in worship." Hence we infer according to their belief, God cannot become incarnate by taking upon himself a fleshy body. They believe in one Supreme being, who is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, though indiffer-



ent to the good or bad deeds of men. He alone they say is to be worshipped. The indifference of a Supreme being to the good or bad deeds of men, seems apparent from the fact that an *almighty* being can have all things as he wishes.

These people in practising what is reproachfully termed *idolatry*, with the use of images representing deified men, do it on the ground that they in passing to the eternal world, have become free from sin, and necessarily a part of God, and by union with the Supreme being are considered objects worthy of adoration on a principle parallel to the worship of Jesus by Christians—without the use of images. All the difference is, that while Christians have but *three* in One, the Jainas have a multitude in One. The prevalence of this religious faith under the opprobrium of idolatry, in a modified form, in Siam, Thibet, Burmah, Tartary, China, Cochin China, Japan and Ceylon, makes it the most extensively received religion in the world. And when we take the fact into consideration that the worship of Jesus and the doctrine of Trinity places Christendom in the same category, it might with propriety be reckoned the general religion of the human race.

Notwithstanding the alleged idolatrous degradation of the Hindoos,—the Abbe Dubois, (a French Catholic missionary of thirty years residence in India,) in his Work on the “Manners and Customs of the Hindoos,” states that “while nearly all Europe was sunk in the dreary gulf of barbarism, India



kept up her head, preserved and extended the sciences, the arts, and civilization." Now, in consequence of Christians having inherited some narrow and bigoted dogmas of faith which exclude all people from salvation who do not embrace their peculiar views, they have become concerned because the whole Gentile world are in their estimation to be eternally lost in their present condition, and therefore go preaching to them—*No salvation out of Christ*. When at the same time the Indians might with better grace proclaim to them—*No salvation out of our incarnate god Vishnu*: for by him we held a high social position in the world, when you, under your incarnate god, *Christ*, were "struggling in the dreary gulf of barbarism." But the magnanimity of the Pagan world allows every nation of people to be saved by its own religion.

The Brahminic Avatar of India, who has lately been preaching with such success in London, when attempting to enlighten his Christian audience on the subject of deity *incarnate*, said—"True incarnation is not, as popular theology defines it, the absolute perfection of the divine nature embodied in mortal form; it is not the God of the universe putting on a mortal body—the infinite becoming finite in space and time, in intelligence and power. It simply means God made manifest in humanity; not God made man, but God in man." From which it is apparent that the *Heathen* conception of Deity in connection with incarnation is more rational than the Christian notion.

Though Christians deride the Pagan belief in a plurality of deities in connection with a Supreme one, yet if they would divest themselves of all religious prejudice superinduced by early training, and consider the multiform views in relation to one personal God as presented by conflicting biblical writers, they could easily discover that the adherents of our system of theology are not far behind the polytheistic nations in chimera respecting Divinity.

Bishop Warburton, in confuting Bayle's argument that religion was not essential to moral government,—in reply to his inquiry—"which was the least hurtful to society, ancient idolatry, or modern atheism"? responded by saying, "I freely own that they are both stark naught." Thus, in answer to the question that naturally arises, which is the most sensible idea of Deity,—the Pagan notion of a plurality of Gods in unison with a supreme one—and the worship of him through the use of images; on the Christian theory of belief that a trio of persons exist in one God, and that the first person, or Supreme one, is only accessible through the bloody sacrifice and atoning meditation of the second, together with the convicting influence of the third? we might, in the language of Warburton to Bayle, consistently say they are both *stark naught!*

That famous English divine, on "Foreign Missions," says, "Catholics, (as they call themselves), and Protestant missionaries go promiscuously to

either India. The *Catholics* have labored most in countries civilized; but giving a commentitious system for the gospel of Christ, it is no wonder that the Pagans should not be greatly disposed to change *old* fables for *new*. And though the Protestant missionaries carry the *genuine gospel* with them into America, yet they preach it to savages with no better success." (vol. 1, p. 376).

Why the American Indians objected to the Christian idea of God, is given by the following quotation from the Rev. D. Brainard's *Journal*, written during his zealous labors as a missionary among them. "It is a notion pretty generally prevailing among them, that it was not the *same God* made them, who made us; but that they were made *after* the white people: which further shows that they imagined a plurality of divine powers. And I fancy they suppose their God gained some special skill by seeing the white people made, and so made them a little better: for it is certain they look upon themselves, and their modes of living, (which, they say, their God expressly prescribed for them), vastly preferable to the white, and their methods. And hence they frequently sit and laugh at them, as good for nothing but to plough and fatigue themselves with hard labor. . . . Hence by the way, many of them look upon it as disgraceful for them to become Christians, as it would be esteemed among Christians to become Pagans. And now, although they suppose our religion will do well enough for us, because prescribed by *our God*, yet it is no ways pro-

per for them, because not of the same make and original. This they have sometimes offered as a reason why they did not incline to hearken to Christianity."

The Rev. J. Wesley, in his "Appeal to men of Reason and Religion," says, "'Tis some years since I was engaged unawares in conversation with a strong reasoner, who at first urged the wickedness of the American Indians, as a bar to our hope of converting them to Christianity. But when I mentioned their temperance, justice and veracity, (according to the accounts I had then received), it was asked, "why if those heathen are such men as these, what will they gain by being made *such christians* as we see everywhere round about us? I could not deny, that they would lose, not gain by such christianity as this." In his remarks on the religious condition of England, he inquires, "Where is the country in which is found so utter a disregard to even Heathen morality? What sin remains in Rome or Constantinople, which we have not imported long ago, (if it was not of our native growth), and improved upon it ever since?" Thus England with its *divine revelation* from the *only true God*, was the best field for missionary labor that Wesley knew of!

The question as to what the American Indians have gained through acquaintance and intercourse with people possessing a belief in the biblical idea of God, might be answered by comparing their religious and social condition as Brainard found them,

with what it now is in our western territories. The inquiry concerning what they have lost, requires a geographical as well as a theological calculation to answer. The case forcibly reminds us of Dr. Chancery's *Reply* to Bishop Chandler's suggestion in his "Appeal to the Public in behalf of the Church, in England and America," that it would be the most proper way for converting savages, to previously instruct them in the arts and manners of civilized life; when he declared that the temptations connected with the arts and manners of civilized life would be more of a hindrance to their conversion than a requisite to accomplish it.

A writer in the "Christian Observer," (vol. 17, p. 872), states that while the English mariners were committing depredations on the New Zealand coast, causing sanguinary conflicts with the natives, the missionaries were received with hospitality among them. This is much more in consistency with the idea of God and divinity as taught by Christ, than the kind of reception that Zealanders would have been likely to meet with at the hands of the English, if a portion of them had attempted to evangelize England, while others of them were engaged in ravaging their coast.

While London contributes her millions for the conversion of Asia, Africa, and the islands of the seas, to the Christian idea of God, it is stated that a million of people in that city scarcely ever attend church: which shows what light estimation the doctrine is held in where ministers get the most

bountiful salaries for preaching it. Yet no one will question the benevolent design of Christian missionaries in their exertions to elevate the Heathen from their state of ignorance and superstition to an equality with themselves in moral worth and intelligence, by teaching them their ideas of God and his plan of salvation, or that their efforts at reformation have in many instances been productive of beneficial results. As the present advanced and enlightened condition of the Christian world is apparently the result of acquiring moral ethics and religious sentiment taught by ancient Pagan nations who arrived at an eminent degree of civilization and literature, there can be no impropriety in endeavoring to benefit the less enlightened portion of the Pagan world. But the direct result of the Bible and the Christian theological idea of God in connection with it, as adopted and taught among those nations by whom it has been accepted as a *divine revelation* from Heaven to men, seems to have been to develop the two extremes of moral life, by producing the *best* and *worst* of men.

It is evident that if the world has an *Almighty* creator and ruler, with a mind or will of his own concerning the moral condition and government of his human creatures, the fact itself would incontrovertibly prove that every thing in connection with its religious affairs must transpire in accordance with his divine will and pleasure. If the squalid and degraded condition of the semi-civilized and barbarous tribes as they exist and have existed for



time immemorial, and the abject servitude in which the female sex have been held among nations claiming some degree of civilization, together with the various forms and phases of iniquity that prevails among those who think themselves enlightened, was not appreciated by him. He, as *almighty*, could order it in harmony with his feeling.

The idea of Christian missionaries attempting to effect a religious revolution among other nations, and at the same time ascribe the work to God, as they do, is demonstrating God in themselves as plainly as the Hindoo philosophers. The same feeling was also displayed by the Israelites under Joshua. When they were about to take hostile possession of Canaan, under the influence of their idea of God and religion, the historian represents the Lord in themselves, as engaging in a personal combat with the inhabitants, resulting in a fearful defeat of the natives, and terrible slaughter of them along the Beth-horon road, with God in actual pursuit of them, (Josh. 10 : 10).

According to Hugh Miller, this idea of God being personated in man is being adopted by the rationalists of Europe. He says that "Oken, designates man as God wholly manifested, and as God become man,—a style of expression at which the English reader may start, as that of the "big mouth speaking blasphemy," but which has become exceedingly common among the rationalists of the continent." But fortunately they do not designate



man as God wholly manifested in battle, as the ancient Israelites did.

The state of belief in relation to Deity among the German rationalists might to some extent be illustrated by a short extract from Prof. Cook, on *Ideology*, when criticising the philosophy of Hegel. Cook says, "Under the abstruse and cloudy statements of that philosopher, Strauss saw clearly involved the positive denial of the personality of the Godhead, the assertion of the phenomenal and evanescent, the incomplete and inadequate character of all existences, the absorption of individuality; in short, a complete system of pantheism, more idealistic than any previous development and at the same time more capable of explaining the events of history, both profane and sacred."

What, where, or who God is, seems to be a problem as difficult of solution, as the mystery involved in the origin of the human race. But Prof. Darwin, on the "Origin of Species," (p. 424), says, "In the distant future I see open fields for far more important researches. Psychology will be based on a new foundation, that of the necessary acquirement of each mental power and capacity by gradation. Light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history." If *Psychology* is to be based on a new foundation, by which light will be thrown on the *origin* of man, it is to be hoped that the whole system of *theology* will be equally favored, by having light thrown on the *present* and *future* of man as he stands related to God.

The most extravagant opinions that have been entertained of what is termed and adored as *God*, seems to have existed among those people claiming a knowledge of the *only true God*. David—the psalmist of Israel, is said to have been a man after *God's own heart*,—by which we might suppose that he possessed correct views of his qualities. This he devoutly expresses by saying, “Blessed be the Lord who teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight,” (Ps. 144: 1). According to the Bible—which is said to be a revelation from the only true God—the Devil was *cursed* by God for teaching a woman the difference between good and evil; and in agreement with the devotional worship of the same book, the Lord was *blessed* by man for teaching the art of war and fighting. What a *Book* to learn our moral lessons from in connection with an idea of the *true God*! Yet it is said to contain all that is essential for us to know on that and all other subjects appertaining to our happiness and salvation.

The Rev. H. W. Beecher, on *Incarnation*, says, “Christ was God, and he bowed his head and died. Men shrink from this thought because they are so gross, and judge by such low measures—because they do not derive their conceptions of God from their higher nature, but from their inferior elements and attributes.” To declare that *God died*, or was put to death for what was considered blasphemy, appears more like judging of him by *low measures* than by conceptions derived from their higher elements and attributes. The theological assumption

is, that the death of God was essential to atone for a crime against God. How detracting to the name of Divinity such an absurd notion in relation to Deity is! Orthodox and evangelical as such a conception is considered by some who think themselves highly enlightened on subject of divinity and the plan of human redemption,—we might suppose that wandering Arab of the desert could conceive a more elevated and sublime view of Deity than that.

When Lieut. Lynch, U. S. N., was making his "Survey of the Dead Sea and River Jordan,"—after having been engaged in conversation with his Mahometan guide concerning the different views of God and divine worship in connection with future salvation, he asked him if he did not think that a *good* Christian might be saved? To which the Moslem replied, "How can you hope it, when you insult the very God you worship by believing that he died the ignominious death of a criminal"? Thus the point on which the Christian was credulous enough to place his entire dependence for salvation, was considered by the incredulous though equally bigoted Mahometan, to be an insult to God sufficiently heinous in its nature to preclude the possibility of salvation!

Yet Beecher's conception harmonizes to some extent with ancient mythology on that subject, as shown by Plutarch's account of the death of *Pan*; as quoted from Howitt's "History of the Supernatural." He says, "In the time of Tiberius, certain

persons embarking in Asia for Italy, sailed by the Echinades, when being becalmed, they heard from thence a loud voice calling one Thamus, an Egyptian mariner among them, commanding him when he came to Palodes, to announce that the great Pan was dead. When the ship arrived at Palodes, Thamus looking out of the hinder deck, pronounced these words in a loud voice—The great Pan is dead! which he had no sooner done, than he was answered by a choir of many voices, making great howling and lamentation, with a certain mixture of admiration." This occurred at the time of Christ's death.

The anonymous author of the "Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation," when on the "Godhead of Christ and the love due to God from Man," says, "If God had caused Jesus Christ, his creature, to suffer, that he might be loved himself for Christ's sufferings, while he had no connection with them, instead of such an exhibition on the part of God producing love to him, it would produce pity for Christ, and aversion towards God." That conveys a rational conception of the suffering and death of God in Jesus Christ: for God could suffer no more in his death than in the martyrdom of any other reformer in the cause of religion and humanity. As rulers, judges, magistrates, teachers and reformers in general, were anciently, in many instances termed gods, Christ in that sense was pre-eminently deserving the appellation of a God. But the idea of Deity giving up the Ghost, as Christ is said to

have done on the *cross*, is too much at variance with reason and modern transcendentalism to be considered consistent with Divinity.

Dr. Hodge, in reviewing Dr. Bushnell's Work, says, "Instead of Immanuel, God manifest in the flesh, he gives us a Christ which is a mere expression thrown on the dark canvass of history, or a being who is neither God nor man. Instead of a true propitiation, he bids us behold a splendid work of art! He further adds, "For the honor of our race we hope such a book as that is not about to turn the world upside down." As we have *scriptural* evidence, (Acts 17 : 6), that the apostles in propagating the doctrine that Hodge advocates, *did* turn the world *upside down*,—and there being no account of it having been restored to its natural position, the inference is that Bushnell's object in attempting to revolutionize the world on the deity of Christ, is to have it again restored to its natural attitude to Divinity, by being placed right side up.

The Christian idea of Deity seems to possess no claims to merit over the primitive creed of those numerous and ancient people, the Chinese—whose chronological history extends back through the vista of ages to a remote and indefinite period of time. According to Burder they conceived the general doctrine of Theism, in regard to the Supreme Being, whom they worshipped under various names, such as Tien or Kien, Shang-tien, Shang-tec and Hoan-Shang-tec. This Being they regarded as possessed of all natural and moral perfections, as

exercising a judicial providence over mankind, in rewarding virtue and punishing vice.

The inhabitants of central Africa, according to Mungo Park, also entertain a noble idea of God as the supreme Ruler of the world, and expect hereafter to enter into either a state of felicity or misery. An extract from a conversation of Addison with a learned gentleman who had become acquainted with a number of the African tribes—as given in his *Spectator*—will serve to illustrate their ideas of God in relation to a future state of existence. “The Supreme Being, therefore, in compliance for this taste for happiness which he has implanted in the soul of man, will raise up, from time to time, say they, every gratification with which human nature is pleased. If we wish to be in groves or bowers, near running streams or falls of water, we shall immediately find ourselves in the midst of such a scene as we desire. If we would be entertained with music, and the melody of sounds, the concert arises upon our wish, and the whole region about is filled with harmony;” etc. The supramundane disclosures of Modern Spiritualism concerning a future state of existence, do not surpass the natural intuitions of those untutored tribes. And the high sense of justice and integrity possessed by some of them in connection with the worship of one Supreme being of infinite power and goodness is attested by Dr. Livingstone in his travels and sojourn among them.

Minutius Felix says, “The world is on our side



in the acknowledgment of one God. I hear the people when they lift up their hands to heaven say nothing, but, 'The God;' 'The great God;' 'The true God;' 'If it should please God;' these expressions of the vulgar are the voice of nature. Even they who make *Jove* supreme, mistake indeed in the name, but agree in the thing, the *one* notion of an Almighty God." Yet in the face of this Christian declaration, Prof. Bolton, in quoting from Arnobius, says, "A short time since, and I myself (alas! what blindness!) was venerating images fresh from the anvil and furnace; gods wrought out of iron, or carved in ivory, logs of wood crowned with flowers." Could Arnobius be so shallow as to believe that such symbols used in worship constituted deities?

The profound and learned Dr. Cudworth, who made the subject of ancient Theism, Atheism, and Polytheism his thorough study, says, "We have now dispatched the first of those three heads proposed to be insisted on, viz., that the Pagans worshipped one and the same supreme God, under many personal names, so that much of their polytheism was but seeming and fantastical, and indeed nothing but the polyonymy of one Supreme God, they making many poetical and political gods of that one natural God; and thus worshipped God by parts and piecemeal."

Salkeld on *Mythology*, says, "In all nations and countries, and in every race of people we discover a reverence for the Divinity, and homage and wor-



ship rendered him, with an undisguised profession of an entire dependence upon him in all their undertakings, and occasions of need, adversity or danger."

Dr. Haven in his *Moral Philosophy*, says, "The worship of the Supreme Being seems to be an instinctive principle, an impulse of our nature, a law of the soul. As such it shows itself under all the forms and conditions of social life, in all ages, and in all countries, in all the various religions of the race, whether true or false, superstitious or reasonable."

Plutarch, in his *Treatise* on the Isis and Osiris of the Egyptian worship, says, "It was a most ancient belief handed down from legislators and divines, to poets and philosophers, that the universe was not upheld fortuitously, without mind, reason, or governor to preside over its affairs."

Cicero, on the subject of a Supreme intelligence, and future life, remarks that, "In everything the consent of all nations is to be accounted the law of Nature, and to resist it is to resist the voice of God."

Dr. Turnbull, in his "Christ in History," identifies Zeus of the Greeks, as the *I am that I am* of Moses. Stillingfleet, Prideaux, Newton, and other theologians have maintained that one and the same God was universally known and worshipped in the Pagan world.

Warburton says "The doctrine of *the one true God* was indeed taught in all places, but as a profound

secret to the *few*, in the celebration of their mysterious rites; while in the land of Judea alone, he had a public and national worship."

George Fox, on "Heathen Divinity set on the Heads of Christians," in his remarks concerning the Egyptian magicians acknowledging the finger of God in turning dust into lice, says, "And now see Professors, Papists and Protestants, how think you could those enchanters confess that was the finger of God, who had neither written Law nor Gospel as you call it, without which you say, you had not known whether there were a God or Christ, if, (says you) written scripture had not declared it to you. And yet these men who had neither written Law nor Gospel, confess the finger of God to king Pharaoh." Thus with all the polytheism that embellished the Egyptian worship anterior to the assumed divine revelation of Moses, the same God was known and adored by those priests; whom Josephus says Abraham visited—after a short sojourn in Canaan, to obtain, if possible, a more correct idea of the Deity; and to adopt their views if he considered them superior to his own. As he seems to have held no conference with Melchisedec on the subject, he evidently considered the Egyptian priesthood better skilled in divine theosophy. After he had been banished from Egypt on account of his duplicity, the king, (according to Josephus), made inquiry of the priests concerning the cause of his family affliction, and they immediately gave him a revelation from God in regard to the cause

of it. This conclusively shows that the Mosaic custom of communicating with God under the new name of Jehovah, was merely a continuation of the old Egyptian manner of holding intercourse with the Deity.

Though Moses in giving his Laws to the Israelites, arrogates the claim of receiving the first revelation from the *only true God*, under the name of *Jehovah*, (Ex. 6 : 3), yet it becomes manifest that it was no other than the same Deity that commissioned Pharaoh Necho, to march with his army against Charchemesh, by the Euphrates. It was by injudiciously attempting to intercept the course of this God directed monarch, that Josiah, the pious king of Judah, fell a victim to his own rashness and imprudence by contending with him in battle at the valley of Megiddo. (2 Chron. 35 : 20—24).

When Pharaoh refused to let Israel go, on the plea that he knew not the Lord, it was only the Mosaic title that he was unacquainted with. Dr. McCaul, in "Aids to Faith" says that in *Genesis* he is called El, El Elyon, El Shaddai, Adonai, etc: and by his new name in Exodus, his identity seems to have been forfeited to the King of Egypt. Dr. Gray does not doubt that Poti-pherah, priest of On, whose daughter Joseph married, was a worshipper of the true God.

Prof. Baring Gould on the "Names of God," in his "Origin and Development of Religious Belief," says, "The Monotheistic Jew called his God Adoni, Lord, and the Phœnician named him Adon.

The Canaanitish Moloq̄h, the Ammonitish Milcom, signified the king, like the Hebrew Malka; and Solomon was blind indeed to erect separate altars to Moloch and Milcom, when in the temple he worshipped Malka. The Chaldean named God, Bel or Baal, also the Lord; or Rimmon and Ram the exalted one: just as the Chinese indicate the supremacy of the sky by the title of Shangti, or the Great Khan."

Clemens Alexandrinus, says, "The one and only God is worshipped by the Greeks Paganically, by the Jews Judiacally, and by us newly and spiritually. For the same God who gave the two Testaments to the Jews and Christians, gave philosophy to the Greeks, by which the omnipotent God is glorified among them." Thus the same Deity was acknowledged and worshipped by the Greeks under the names of Zeus and Apollo, while he was known to the Latins by the name of Jove or Jupiter; to the Persians he was recognized by the names of Mithras and Ormuzd; to the Indians as Bramah or Bram; to Egyptians and Scythians as Isis and Osiris, (or according to Herodotus), Ammon and Pappaeus; while every civilized nation adored the same God by some accepted and peculiar title identified with their religious worship.

But Dr. Dwight, on the "Unity of God," says, "Several ancient nations as well as individuals, particularly the Persians, Egyptians, Chaldeans and Greeks, according to Plutarch, agreed in the acknowledgment of two Gods; Plutarch himself

also, and according to this testimony, Plato in his old age, together with the Pythagoreans, acknowledged two Gods; the one the author of good, and the other the author of evil." Admitting this to be so, we find it to be in perfect harmony with the Christian theology on that point. Satan, as the author of evil, is emphatically styled in Scripture the God of this world, in opposition to Jehovah, the reputed author of good. And Satan is not only placed on an equality with him in power, but vindicates his superior psychological ability, by being theologically represented as successful in gaining the most souls!

Thus instead of the Pagan idea of Deity being limited to images, and their worship confined to blocks, stocks and stones, as is common with Christians to suppose, we have the united testimony of the most learned divines who have published the result of their research, that an unseen and Supreme intelligence was universally worshipped among all the Polytheistic nations of antiquity. This view is eloquently sustained by Pope's versification of Homer's *Illiad*, in such language as,—

"Ye strive in vain. If I but lift this hand,  
I heave the heavens, the ocean, and the land;  
For such I reign unbounded and above,  
And such are men and gods compared with Jove."

## CHAPTER VI.

Farrar on the Hebrew idea of God—Jews' Reply to Voltaire—Indian idea of God more spiritual than that of the Hebrew—Holwell—Spiritual progression of the Jews through intercourse with the Persians—Stanley—Goulburn—Rose—American Indians more spiritual than the Hebrews—Mosheim—Balaam—Hebrew custom of pronouncing curses in imitation of their idea of God—Newton—Irrelevant qualities of God entertained by the Prophets—Wayland—Stowe—A. Clarke—Swedenborg—Ashley—Plato and his philosophy contrasted with Pauline Christianity and ancient Judaism—S. Clarke—Lightfoot—Brougham—Bolton—Chateaubriand—Trinity of Pagan origin—Payson—Olshausen—Hull—Graves on Spiritualism—Neander—Inconsistency of Paul's preaching—Rawlinson—Wordsworth—Catechism—Dwight—Conybeare on the Edenic command.

The Rev. A. S. Farrar, M. A., F. G. S., F. R. A. S., in a sermon preached before the University of Oxford, June, 1858,—and published in his "Science in Theology," says, "Thus to a sensuous people like the ancient Jews, God was represented as having arms and hands, or as being swayed by human passions, by anger, hate, repentance: and to the Christians, God is described, in the religion which was to commend itself to the more civilized nations of Europe, as having the higher qualities of mind, and as invested with the ineradicable, and mysterious attributes of personality." Though Christians retain the personal idea of God taught



by Moses, yet according to the language of Farrar, their conceptions of Deity are irreconcilable with the rude and sensual notions entertained by the ancient Jews, though they are retained unimpeached in the Christian theology. As the doctrine of supernal existence was not conceived or taught under the supervision of Jehovah in Mosaic jurisprudence—and religion would now be null without it, why should the Christian adhere so tenaciously to the untenable belief that the God of the Jew, and that of the Christian are identical in spiritual qualities?

The Amsterdam Jews in *reply* to Voltaire, make the inquiry—"What shall we say of Mr. Voltaire, who by taking advantage of some metaphorical expressions of Scripture, coolly affirms that the Jews believed God to be corporeal? Is this great man less acquainted with the Jews, or is he less equitable toward them than even Pagans?" But Pagans never were so silly as to lay claim to revelation from a personal God of such a sensuous and corporeal nature as Moses did. And if all his testimony indicating a belief that God was possessed with feelings of a material nature are to be taken for metaphorical expressions, we would be justifiable in pronouncing the whole account of his legislation to the Israelites an allegorical history. The Jews of the present day, like Voltaire's opponents, entertain much more enlightened views of Deity than the idea conveyed of him by Moses; which was inferior to that of the Indians in regard to spirituality.



Mr. Holwell, who had a long residence in India, and translated a part of the *Shaster*, (which is as old as the Jewish records,) informs us that the name *Bramah*, is derived from *Bram*, spirit, and *Mah*, powerful. This name he says the Indians give to the author of the *Shaster*; by which they denote his spirituality and the divinity of his doctrine. *Jehovah*, the Hebrew name for the Deity whom Moses declares to have dictated those moral and ceremonial laws contained in the Pentateuch, for the civil and religious government of the Israelites, admits of no such incorporeal exegetical derivation in connection with Hebrew anthropomorphism.

Evidence of more spirituality and less addictedness to idolatry among ancient Pagans than among Jews, is shown in one instance by Dean Stanley, when he says, "In contact with Cyrus, the Israelites found for the first time in the Heathen world, not a temptation to idolatry, but a protection of that belief in the unity of God, which now as never before began to take hold on the national mind. Of all the Gentile forms of faith, the religion of the Persians was the most simple, and the most spiritual. Their abhorrence of idols was pushed almost to fanaticism;" etc. (*History of the Jewish Church*, Vol. 2, p. 640).

Thus after their acquaintance with the Persian mode of worship—subsequent to the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, the Jews by embracing their spiritual and iconoclastic sentiment, forever re-

nounced idolatry. The advanced condition, and high moral tone of Persian character, effected a change in Hebrew fetichism that the vigilance, and austere enactments of Moses never could.

Dr. Goulburn, in *Reply* to Dr. Temple, on the "Education of the World," says, "The Babylonish captivity cured them altogether of idol worship, while the dispersion which accompanied it answered another great end,—it brought the Jews in contact with the Gentile mind, and thus put God's trained masters into communication with their scholars." But what was there to cure them of idol worship in Babylon or Persia, but the religious example of the people among whom they dwelt? According to their history, God and Moses *both* failed to *cure* them of it when they were to themselves and living under their own government in Canaan. And instead of the Jews being God's *trained masters*, as Goulburn assumes, the circumstances of the case stand directly the other way. Though fortunately for orthodox argument, the Rev. H. J. Rose, in *Reply* to Dr. Williams, on the "Critical School," claims to have discovered from Nizsch's "Academical Lectures," that it can no longer be maintained that the demonology and angelology of the Jews was learned at Babylon, as Gesenius, Ewald, Hupfeld and other rationalists have satisfactorily shown!

When or where they became schooled in demonology is unknown, but we find that they sacrificed to devils as far back as the time of Moses, (Deut. 32: 17). And it is evident that they were not

sufficiently learned in angelogy to have any personal names for them before their intercourse with those people by whom they were held in captivity. Tobit, who had a residence in Nineveh before the overthrow of the Jewish monarchy, mentions the name of Raphael, and Daniel, with a long residence in Babylon, and his name enrolled with the Magi, became acquainted with the names of Michael and Gabriel. Esdras, a Hellenistic Jew of after ages, introduced the name of Uriel. The Talmud compilers of the Hagiographa, do not deny that these names for angels were borrowed from the Persians during the Captivity, as taught by the Magi. Yet they nevertheless contend that it was Raphael who delivered the Cabalistic science and philosophy to Adam in Paradise.

Prof. Baring Gould, in his "Heathenism and Mosaism," says, "The history of Mosaism is one of utter failure. It never took firm hold on the Jew till it was resolved into a complicated net-work of ceremonial. . . . The period of the Judges is one of relapse into Paganism—David revived Mosaism, but it was too insipid for Solomon, who fell into idolatry." As the *Law* which these people are said to have received from Moses concerning God and divine worship, had been lost for ages, and the original manuscript that Hilkiiah claims to have found among the rubbish of the temple, (2 Chron. 34: 14), shortly prior to the dissolution of the monarchy, probably never seen or heard of by the captives, they were left entirely dependent on their

conquerors for the superior idea of God, which they ever after adhered to.

Spirituality was more largely developed among the N. American Indians at the time of their discovery, than it was among the Jews, previous to the Captivity; and their conceptions of Deity much more sublime and consistent with internal religion. While the Jews were taught to worship God as a personal character, who is said to have achieved miraculous exploits at variance with the fixed laws of Nature, for their special benefit and injury of others; the Indians separated God from nothing, and entertained the grand idea that the Great Spirit spoke in the rustling leaves, the bursting bud, the rippling stream, the rumbling thunder, and from all things in Nature they were ever holding converse with him in his manifold works.

The Jewish idea of God's immateriality and their view of future spiritual existence, which they, (with the exception of the Sadducees, who rigidly adhered to Mosaism), had acquired in the time of Christ, is further shown to have been of Gentile origin by the ecclesiastical historian, Dr. Mosheim, when commenting on their God-idea during the latter period of their history. He says, "All these opinions and others of a kindred nature, were, as it should seem, borrowed by the Jews from the doctrine of the Chaldeans and Persians, amongst whom their ancestors had for a long time sojourned in captivity." From which testimony it appears that

their most enlightened ideas of a Divine and Eternal being were of Heathen origin.

From the biblical narrative of Balaam—who, from his name, was doubtless a prophet or priest of Baal, another name for Deity,—and sometimes called Baalim; he apparently possessed a more enlightened idea of an immutable and Divine existence than the cotemporary prophets and priests of Israel. He said to Balak, the son of Zippor—when called upon by him to curse Israel, that God was not man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent, (Num. 23 : 19). When at the same time it was common with Moses and the prophets to ascribe both of these fallible qualities to him, in harmony with their ideas of his nature. As Balaam was living near the Euphrates, in the land of Shinar—where the Jews subsequently obtained their most correct ideas of God—and in the service of a Pagan king, it is not to be inferred that he was anything else in religion than a Pagan himself, notwithstanding he speaks of Deity in the same manner, and recognizes him by the same name as the Israelites—which he was doubtless acquainted with before they were. But irrespective of his religious sentiment, why should the Mosaic God—if he is such a Being as our theology teaches, be so apprehensive of the fearful consequences that were supposed would result from his execration on those “chosen” people? Could not Omnipotence avert the pernicious effects of a malediction pronounced by a man who was acting in opposition to his will, without manifesting

such a sense of anxiety in regard to the subject as his intercourse with Balaam evinced ?

The Hebrew belief in the dreadful effect of a curse, appears to have been an ancient superstitious notion, derived from the mythic account of Deity cursing his works in the beginning, because they did not operate to his satisfaction. The unhappy and mischievous consequences that were supposed to result from *Divine* curses, induced the Hebrews to inaugurate the custom, and incorporate it into their religious ritual for the purpose of dealing out judgment to offenders on earth. But the fact of Balak sending for a Chaldean soothsayer to come and curse the Israelites, shows that its supposed direful results were believed in, and the custom practised among Gentile nations. And the historic fact elicited by the Hebrew narrative, that Jehovah deprecated the disastrous effects of a Heathen malediction upon his "chosen people," places the Israelite faith and worship on a level with Paganism and renders the two systems identical in the abstract.

This misconceived idea of Deity passionately venting curses—founded on the natural character of his assumed people, is displayed throughout the whole Biblical history, as being consistent with their rude and malignant proclivities. According to the primitive writer, the Lord commenced it by cursing the Serpent; he next cursed the ground, and then pronounced his malediction on Cain, and cursed him from the earth. Noah, soon after the flood, relieved himself of an execration, by cursing



a portion of his offspring. Moses—the great law-giver of Jehovah, indulged in the malevolent practice the most extensively, and pronounced his anathema on all who did not conform to all things written in his book to do them. His successor Joshua entailed his curse on the man who should ever attempt to rebuild Jericho. The angel of the Lord—according to Deborah, commanded the people to curse bitterly the inhabitants of Meroz, because they refused to come and help the Lord fight against Jabin, king of Canaan. David uttered his execration against Captain Joab, for disobedience, and Shimei cursed David for usurping the throne of Israel—neither of which imprecations produced any mischievous results. Elisha cursed the little children—which, without dispute was a *little* business for a prophet of the Lord to engage in. Jeremiah said every one cursed him; and he—perhaps for consolation, cursed the day wherein he was born, and ignobly ejaculated his malediction on the man who brought the tidings of his birth to his father, (Jer. 20 : 15). Job also cursed the day that gave him birth, which corroborates the opinion that they anticipated no future state of existence.

Paul continues the practice in the New Testament, by unceremoniously declaring his *anathema maranatha* against all who did not love the Lord Jesus Christ; and expressed his willingness to have all accursed that preached a gospel different from his. So much interested in the “cuss” does he seem to have been, that he even “magnanimously” declared



his willingness to be accursed himself for his kinsmen according to the flesh! Jesus is said to have let the barren fig-tree feel the *withering* effect of his execration; and he was next *theologically* cursed by the Law, for Paul says, he was made a curse for us, for it is written cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. The apostle James was sufficiently progressed in humanity and moral refinement to see the folly of such an impious practice, when he said that blessing and cursing should not proceed out of the same mouth.

Bishop Newton, says, "Cursing was a superstitious ceremony in use among the Heathen in the days of Moses, to devote their enemies to destruction in the beginning of wars, as if the gods would enter into their passions, and were as unjust and partial as themselves." But in consequence of being religiously biased in favor of the Mosaic idea of God, he was unable to see that the Hebrew construction and use of a curse was in exact conformity with the Pagan custom and belief. For the biblical history incontrovertibly proves that the Israelites under Moses and his successors, believed that Jehovah entered into the passions when engaged in war, and "was as unjust and partial as themselves;" as shown by such instances as the angel instigating them to curse the inhabitants of Meroz for refusing to assist the Lord in combatting Sicera—commander of Jabin's army, (Judg. 5: 23). In fact, as far as fighting, cursing, and swearing, were concerned, those Israelites were an antitype

of their God ; and their religion merely a bigoted ramification from Paganism, as their rites and ceremonies were essentially the same.

Dr. Gill—on the “Names of God,” says, “Some derive this word, (Elohim), from a root, which signifies to curse and swear.” As that corresponds well with the character of the Israelites, it is probably a correct derivation of the term ; and if the *root* had also implied a fighting propensity, it would have been a fair representation of those people.

But with the benefit of the heavenly light which is now illuminating the world in the march of human progression, and the benign influence of growing philanthropy, the uncivilized custom of cursing, swearing, and fighting in harmony with the idea of God, is discovered to be rude and ungodly, whereby the continuance of such degrading habits are becoming limited to such as whose progress in morality and humanity has not been commensurate with the age. Since the Lord has relinquished those practices and retired from the battle-field, Satan has taken charge of such disgraceful responsibilities. Though Malachi—agreeable with the ancient *inspired* notion of the Lord’s character, closes the Old Testament record with a threatened curse, we have the consolation to find that the revelator John, in the closing part of the New—in a more divine and heavenly strain, points to a day when there *shall be no more curse*. All hail the day !

The Israelites apparently took their ideas of Deity for a criterion in all their wicked and flagitiou

conduct. Isaiah, (63 : 17), says, "O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts?" Dean Stanley, says, "The discovery of a divinity of authorship in the prophecies of Isaiah has been termed *the undeifying of Isaiah*." Such an expression of sentiment in relation to the Lord, is certainly sufficiently *undeifying* in its signification, even if a diversity of authorship in his reputed writing did not exist. What kind of a God would inspire an individual to call the people to repentance, and at the same time—agreeable with the charge, hold himself responsible for causing them to transgress?

Dr. Stowe, on the "Origin and History of the Books of the Bible," says, "The Theologian must pick out the truths of theology, as he finds them here and there scattered about in the Bible; and if he wishes to arrange them in scientific *hortus siccus*, he must make it himself, for God never makes such things." Thus when *he* selects the truths out of the Bible, the inference is, that those passages which impeach God's integrity will not be required in order to arrange theological *truths* into a scientific *hortus siccus*! He further says, "Here comes in the objection that the Bible can be made to mean every thing and anything, all sects build upon it, the most diverse doctrines are derived from it. This infelicity it shares with every thing else that has to be expressed in human language. This is owing to the imperfection, the necessary imperfection of human language, and to the infirmity, and per-

verse ingenuity of the human mind." But if the records of a book were given through the inspired dictation of an *Almighty* being of infinite perfection, as the product of his divine and infallible intellect, he would take sufficient interest in its diction and translations to prevent such infelicity of language as the theologian deplures.

Dr. Wayland, on the *Holy Scriptures*, in his "Moral Science," when defining the special objects of the Old and New Testaments, in connection with the design and purpose of Christ's advent into the world, says, "By his obedience to the Law, and voluntary suffering and death, he removed the obstacles to our pardon, which under the former dispensation existed in consequence of the holiness of God." From this we infer that God was unable to pardon sinners under the old dispensation on account of his infinite perfection! The theological idea that God is so holy that he required the voluntary suffering and death of a man personified in himself, to remove the obstacles of our pardon in the present dispensation, has run God's *holiness* so deep into the ground, that another dispensation seems indispensable for the purpose of having it resurrected for the benefit of the human race. And if the latitudinarianism of the present transition from nominal Christianity to Free Religion, by the most progressive portion of the race, does not accomplish it, it is to be hoped that it will not be less important and beneficial in its moral results.

Yet we do not dispute that the so-called *Scrip-*

*tures* constitute the greatest storehouse of moral and religious instruction we have—produced by the assiduous labors of virtuous and well meaning men through a long series of ages, in accordance with their conceptions of virtue and intuitions of Divinity; but with the benefit of their ethical teaching, the period in history has arrived that demands criticism on their illiberal and supercilious ideas of God, as presented by the various authors, demonstrating the incompatibility of their views with the intuitions of the human mind in a more humane and mature age of the world.

Isaiah, (45 : 7), says, “I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things.” Jeremiah, (20 : 7), says, “O Lord, thou hast deceived me,” etc. Ezekiel, (14 : 9), says, “If the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet.” Amos, (3 : 6), says, “Can there be evil in a city and the Lord not done it.” The biblical historian even charges the Lord with hardening the heart of Pharaoh and other kings whom the Israelites conquered. Thus it is apparent that the Jewish prophets held the Lord responsible for what false prophecy was given through deceit, and considered him the source of evil by being the cause and creator of it.

Dr. A. Clarke, expounds that text of Ezekiel, by saying, “That is, he ran before he was sent, he willingly became the servant of Satan’s illusions; and I *suffered* this to take place, because he and his followers refused to consult and serve me.” To say

that a man ran after the illusions of Satan before the Lord had sent him, would only be charging to Satan what the prophets ascribe to the Lord; and which he must have acquiesced in, or he as *almighty* would not have *suffered* it to be so; which unavoidably implicates God in the ratification of evil.

Emanuel Swedenborg, on the subject of God's "Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omnipresence," says, "Evidently, therefore, the divine Omnipotence can by no means from itself go out to contact with any thing evil, nor from itself promote it; for evil averts itself, from which it comes to pass, that evil is altogether separated from him, and cast into hell, between which and heaven, where he is, there is a great gulf." As he elsewhere maintains that God is too good to damn any one, or even to get angry and look with a "stern countenance," curiosity is excited to know who sent the rich man to hell—who is scripturally represented to be irremediably separated from another *very* rich man, (Gen. 13 : 2), who had more guilt laid to his charge than ever Dives had. To suppose that the Lord was satisfied to let him lie in such torments for running after Satan's illusions when he could have prevented it, would bring his *goodness* down to a parallel with that of his adversary.

The Hebrew prophets ascribe a much more carnal and harmful nature to God than was ever conceded to him by the Grecian philosophers. Plato says, "Of good things there is no other cause



than God, but for evil things we must seek for any other cause." The high merit of Platonism is demonstrated by the writings of Origen, whose great learning, and assiduity in the cause of Christianity, done more toward settling the true text of the Scriptures than any other ancient critic. The Rev. R. K. Ashley, on "Ancient Dualism in the East," says, "Plato and Paul both preach God. One proclaims him the eternal Father, the other the Father of spirits. Paul's idea was drawn from the written word; the Platonic was fashioned from tradition or reason. Revelation was the basis of both . . . . In Plato we find a corroboration and almost germ of Christian theism. He recognized the presence of evil, the necessity of Divine mercy—a doctrine that swelled the theme of Isaiah and Paul." When on the "Christian Development of the Abrahamic Idea," he further says, "Confucius had a glimpse of the true; Zoroaster beheld something of the Edenic form, while Plato entered within the gates, and almost talked with God face to face."

While Plato founded his conception of God and his goodness on reason and philosophy. Paul based his theopathetical views of divinity and hope of salvation on faith, and the assumptions of Moses and the prophets. In vindication of his theory in opposition to Platonism he says, "For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," (1 Cor. 1: 21). Dr. S.



Clarke, in a Sermon on that text, (vol. 5), when inferring that God had originally endowed men with natural capacities, faculties and abilities, by the use of which they might know him in a right manner, illustrates, that, according to Paul's idea, the Gentile world was blameable and justly condemned, for not obtaining, through the use of their natural faculties, what he supposed to be the correct view of God and the plan of salvation. Thus Paul in congruity with the inherent enthusiasm that characterized the Jewish race, pronounced condemnation on the philosophic Pagan world, because they had through the use of their natural faculties, arrived at such an exalted conception of Deity, that they could not believe in the *foolishness* of his preaching, and endorse the high premium that the context of his discourse to the Corinthian church placed on ignorance.

Prof. Bolton says that Paul's "preaching was foolish to the Greeks because it did not square with their notions of wisdom." Thus according to Paul's preaching, the Grecians fell short of salvation in consequence of God endowing them with so much wisdom that they could not believe in the unreasonableness of his doctrine!

Dr. Lightfoot observes that—*The wisdom of God*, is not to be understood as the wisdom which had God for its *author*; but the wisdom which had God for its *object*." But if the Greeks derived their sublime views of God from the natural wisdom which he had given them, the inference is that the

wisdom which had God for its author, could not fail to give a correct idea of God as its object.

Chateaubriand, on the "Christian Mystery of the Trinity," in refutation of infidelity, remarks, that "Plato seems to allude to this incomprehensible dogma in several of his works;" and in quoting from Dacier, says, "not only is it alleged that he had a knowledge of the *Word*—the Son of God, but it is asserted that he was acquainted with the Holy Ghost." Thus Paul, centuries after the time of this Greek metaphysician, had this mystical Platonic idea of a trio in Deity—so foreign to the monotheistic conceptions of the Sinai lawgiver, incorporated into the Christian theology, and then ungraciously condemns the Hellenic schools because they would not give credence to what new fangled theory he advanced.

Though the present Christian trinitarian creed was probably drawn up by Hilary, Bishop of Arles, yet its original compiler, Athanasius, is admitted by Prof. Bolton to have been of Heathen parentage. But the persecution of Socinus, and the fate that Servetus met at the hands of Calvin, shows what fanatical hold the doctrine had taken in the Christian church.

Dr. Gurney, in quoting from the Chaldea Targums to demonstrate the Deity of Christ as the *word*, apparently ignores the fact that the idea of Christ constituting the second person of the God-head under that title, was not conceived by the apostles until they had become acquainted with the

philosophy of Philo in Egypt, and Plato in Greece. John, by having a residence in Ephesus—which was famous for Gentile learning and theosophy, became thoroughly indoctrinated in the belief, as shown by his vindication of it in the beginning of his gospel, in opposition to the more prevalent Hellenic sentiment of gnosticism.

When adducing the testimony of Amelius—a Platonic philosopher of the third century—as quoted by Eusebius, Gurney further says, “And this indeed was the Eternal Word, by which created things were made. Such was the sentiment of Heraclitus; and that barbarian moreover, (meaning the apostle John), is of opinion that the Word was established in the order and dignity of the beginning—that he was with God and was God.” As Heraclitus taught his religious sentiment in Ephesus centuries before the time of John, it furnishes conclusive evidence that the doctrine was of Pagan origin, and that John was only attempting some theological improvement on the mystical subject, by declaring his coeternal existence with God. And the chief aim of Justin Martyr in his *Dialogue* with Trypho, the Jew, seems to have been to demonstrate Jesus to be the Logos. This is to be accounted for from the fact that he was formerly an exemplary Platonic philosopher, who apparently out of true devotion, embraced the cause of the Christians through sympathy for them in the unjust persecution they were suffering in Palestine at the hands of the intolerant Jews.

It certainly never entered into the mind of Jesus that his followers would deify him under the Heathen title of the *Logos* or *Word*, which idea of Deity was also taught in the Zend Avesta of Zoroaster, anterior to the time of Plato.

Dr. Gray, in his *Jewish and Heathen Literature*," says, "Pythagoras is supposed to have introduced into Greece, the doctrine of the three hypostases of the Trinity." The probability then is, that a trinity in Deity had its origin in Persia or India, from whence the traveling Therapeuts obtained it, and introduced it into Egypt, where Pythagoras became indoctrinated in it when he visited, and became initiated into their theological colleges.

From the moral teaching and ethical precepts of such men as Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Zeno in Greece; the Zoroasters in Persia; Menu, Buddha, and Chrishna in India; Laotse and Confucius in China; Philo Judaeus and the Therapeuts in Egypt, together with religious instructions of the Essenes, Jesus and his disciples obtained the fundamental principles of that system of religion which is now known by the name of *Christianity*.

As the extreme religionists, previous to the present Christian dispensation, had become advocates of poverty and abstinence, it shows that the old Israelite idea that power and affluence proved the divine favor, had been discarded. Celsus,—who wrote in antagonism to the bigoted dogmas introduced into the Christian system, as inaugurated by the former advocates of Mosaism, asserts—accord-

ing to Lardner, that the expression of Jesus—"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven," is borrowed from Plato; who declared that to be very good and very rich was impossible. This phrase, he maintains, Jesus disfigured, by substituting the language that his disciples give in the New Testament. Though the saying might possibly have had its origin with Confucius, who said that "the good man employs himself only with virtue, the bad with his riches."

A writer in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, (Vol. 22, p. 691), when commenting on the *Criticism* of Dr. Geiger of Breslau—a *Jew* of acknowledged learning and ability—states that according to his History, all the religious precepts and moral doctrine taught by Jesus, had previously been propagated by Hillel. This led the writer to wonder why Hillel had not been declared founder of the Christian doctrine. As the moral features of the system had been taught long before the time of Hillel, among Pagan nations, it required a more remarkably gifted person than had yet appeared, with whose name to have a new religious dispensation successfully identified. The prudent advice of Dr. Gamaliel, in saving the apostles from an ignominious death in the early part of their ministry, (Acts 5: 33-40) shows that he had become indoctrinated in the religious sentiment of his grandfather Hillel.

The Christians, by taking advantage of some obscure prophecies in the Jewish records, which can.

not be made to appear applicable to Christ, adopted the Oriental custom of the world in that age, of deifying eminent and virtuous men, and had him blended into Deity, as the second person of the adorable Trinity, under the title of a *Mediator* or *Saviour*. And as Dr. Jenyns, on the "Superior Merits of Christianity"—as quoted from Dr. Hamilton's "Christian Classics," (Vol. 4), says, "No other religion ever ventured to declare the unpardonable nature of sin without a mediatorial interposition, and the vicarious atonement of a superior being,"—it is manifest that the apostles, by introducing bloody atonement into the Christian system through the martyrdom of Christ, in sacrifice for sin, only united a superstitious absurdity to Pagan morals.

The cause for which Jesus was put to death—which occurred at the hands of religious fanatics on account of certain religious principles that he taught and practiced, was to prevent the further spread of heresy in the orthodox church. But instead of his crucifixion suppressing or injuring his moral and religious sentiment, it only served to popularize it, whereby his ethical precepts have been handed down to succeeding generations, and they benefitted thereby so far as they have been put in practice. Though Paul, in ordaining the new dispensation, had the candor to admit that he was debtor to the Greeks and barbarians, to the wise and the unwise, yet as Grecian philosophy could not appreciate bloody sacrifice in atonement for sin, he expressed his desire to preach his new



theory in Rome. And for his great zeal in the cause, St. Chrysostom, in his *Homolies* on Romans, calls him a noble soul.

When Constantine, the Roman emperor, in the early part of the fourth century, embraced this religious faith, as taught by the seceders from Judaism, and had it incorporated into the Roman state, it then became the acknowledged and universal religion of the western world; as sanctioned by the Ecumenical council convened at Nicaea, A. D. 325. The remains of old Paganism was then persecuted to annihilation; yet history gives attestation to the fact that the change from Heathenism to Christianity was merely nominal, and attended with no marked improvement either in the moral or religious condition of the people.

Chateaubriand further says, "The sages of Greece viewed society in its moral relations, but our latest philosophers have considered it in its political bearings. The philosophy of the one was based on religion; the philosophy of the other on atheism. *Be virtuous, and ye shall be free*, cried Plato to the people: and under such sentiment Greece was happy." In contrasting Platonism and Mosaism, we find the sentiment of the Hebrew lawgiver in connection with his moral precepts to be—"Destroy the inhabitants of Canaan, and their possessions shall be yours." Under such aggressive and pillaging policy, Israel never was a happy people: and after having been repeatedly held in bondage by other nations, were finally left without any civil

government of their own. Yet it is alleged that they were the only people to whom a *divine* law was *revealed* for happy life and government.

Dr. Payson, in a Sermon on the "Condition of Men Without the Bible," (vol, 3), says, "If we had no Bible, men could never know what is right or wrong, or even whether there is any such thing as right or wrong." But did not Plato know as well what was right and what was wrong, without the Bible, as Moses did in composing the first part of it, with his mind set on plundering and destroying peaceable people who never had given him any cause for offence? While the Jews have long since shared the fate of all naturally hostile and aggressive nations of antiquity, Greece still holds a name in the present geographical history and government of the world.

Dr. Finlay, in the "Christian Examiner," (vol. 72, p. 406), says, "Greece is the only European race which has survived the destruction of Pagan civilization; its language is the oldest language of civilized men which remains to us a living language." If the Greek vernacular tongue was so much superior to the Hebrew dialect, as to supercede it, and continue to live when that has become obsolete, we can, on that principle, calculate that their philosophical views in relation to Deity, will remain extant, when the Mosaic conception of an angry and jealous personal God, in connection with Pauline sentiment of bloody sacrifice in reconciliation, are consigned to oblivion.

Though Paul had apparently arrived at a more enlightened idea of a Divine being than was conceived by Moses and the Hebrew writers, yet when he charges God with sending strong delusions for the purpose of causing people to believe a lie, and then to be damned for not believing the truth, (2 Thes. 2: 11, 12), he utters sentiment equally utopian and defamatory: whereby he manifestly degrades the Divine character far below the Grecian standard of Divinity. Lord Brougham, remarks, that "even the inspired penmen have constant resource to the views which are derived from the contemplation of nature when they would exalt the Deity by a description of his attributes, or inculcate sentiment of devotion toward him." But Paul, in this instance was plainly an exception to that rule, and instead of exalting the qualities of Deity by the contemplation of Nature, like the Grecian poets, he had resource to views directly slanderous, by contemplating and depicting his malevolence.

The question naturally arises, how can a Being of infinite holiness and perfection, have any connection with evil or deceit, according to the teaching of the prophets? or with sending delusions to effect the damnation of his creatures—agreeable with Pauline sentiment?

The voluminous New Testament expositor, Dr. Olshausen, in commenting on this expression of Paul, says that "God punishes sin by sin." To infer that a holy Being should condescend to make use

of what is theologically represented to be so hateful to him, in accomplishing his malignant purposes by causing his offspring to believe lies to their ruin, would be libellous to the name of his divinity, and place him on a moral equality with his theological antagonist, who is reputed to be the father of lies.

The Rev. Moses Hull, in a Discourse on this calumnious text, endeavors to elucidate the *dark* subject by saying, "The doctrine of the text is that God is determined to *damn* the world, and all who escape damnation, escape what God intended to be their fate." What an *awful* idea brother Hull entertains of that portion of *sacred* writ!

The Rev. J. K. Graves, in a Sermon on the same subject, delivered in the first Baptist church, Memphis, says, "Of these delusions, Spiritism,—commonly called Spiritualism is one of the chief. It has spread rapidly, and has its votaries in almost every city and hamlet in this broad land of ours. It has at length assumed the phase of a new religion, and stiles itself *Free Christianity*, but should be called *Free Religion*; as it denies the teachings of the Bible, and its future awards, and thus opens a broad-guage road to ruin, along which thousands of deluded victims are hurried with astonishing, awful rapidity." Thus he ascribes the modern *Spiritual* development to God, while his orthodox brethren in general declare it to be the work of the Devil, and he, by exposing and endeavoring to check the further spread of it, is acting in opposition to what he holds to be the operations of God!

Dr. Neander, when quoting from Thomas Aquinas, (*Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 4), says, "The knowledge of God is, in a certain general confused way, implanted in all." From the inimical and inhuman reputation that Paul gives of God, in the malignant condemnation of his creatures, we may reasonably conclude that the *knowledge* of God was implanted in him in a most superlatively *confused* way; and diametrically at variance with the manner in which it was implanted in the apostle Peter, when he said that "God was not willing that any should perish." Paul, by giving utterance to such language, after informing the Romans of the riches of God's goodness in bringing men to repentance, appears to have entertained as diverse views of his attributes as he did of the moral condition of the Corinthian church, when (1 Cor. 6; 11), he commended the members for not only being justified, but also sanctioned in their sober and virtuous lives; but before his letter was finished (chap. 11), charged them with eating and drinking *damnation* to themselves by making a feast of the Lord's supper!

Prof. Martineau on the "Physics and Metaphysics," of Plato, says, "With Plato, Mind, Cause, God, and the idea of all Good, are interchangeable terms." But Paul has expressed such conflicting and incongruous ideas of Divinity and God's goodness, that his metaphysical theories do not appear to be sufficiently well balanced to stand on any logical foundation. But notwithstanding his wild

notions on religious subjects, he was eminently a worthy man, and perhaps is not responsible for all the writing that stands connected with his name. Prof. Rawlinson on the "Historical Evidences of the Truth of the Sacred Records," (p. 157), says, "Little reliance, however, can be placed on these titles, or the headings of ancient manuscripts generally. The early Jewish and Christian writers—even the most reputable—published their works with the substitution of venerated names, without an idea that they were guilty of falsehood or deception in so doing." If that is the principle on which the Gospels and Epistles were got up, there can be but little reliance placed on the genuineness of their authorship. But as Dr. Wordsworth, in *Reply* to "Essays and Reviews," (p. 376), declares all the apostolic writings to be the word of the living God, inspired by the Holy Ghost, and worthy of their divine author, the conclusion is that it is a matter of but small importance whose names were attached to such *infallible* records!

From the Mosaic idea of God instigating one tribe of people to plunder and destroy others less hostile, and the Pauline doctrine of God deluding men for the purpose of having them damned, we arrive at the conclusion that it is next to impossible to distinguish between the biblical idea of God, and the orthodox notion of the Devil. A discovery of the *theological* fact that the Hebrew Godship was supplanted in the Gospel dispensation, and Satan substituted as God of this world, does not satisfac-



torily obviate the perplexity ; inasmuch as it does not appear to be fully settled yet, whether he has the entire control of its moral affairs, or whether Israel's deity still retains an interest in conjunction with his adversary through a subordinate relation.

The framers of the Presbyterian *Catechism* do not appear to have possessed any more enlightened views of the Divine attributes than their theological or mythological predecessors. They inform us that—"No mere man since the fall, is able, in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God ; but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed." How slanderous and derogatory to the reputation of a prudent and loving father, to charge him with giving commands to his children that they were unable to keep, and then foolishly get angry, and curse them for unavoidably failing to comply with them, as the christian theology portrays the Divine character ! This theological charge is acceded to by Dr. Dwight, who, when on "Man's Inability to Obey the Law of God," says, "The next subject which offers itself to our consideration in a system of Theology, is the nature of that inability to obey the Divine Law which is commonly acknowledged to be a part of the human character ; etc., (Vol 5, p. 458).

Dr. Conybeare, in his "Defence of Revealed Religion," when replying to Tindal's inquiry how so kind and tender a parent as God could play the tyrant, and impose commands on us, which do not flow from the relations we stand in to him and one

another, says, "God may give us positive commands, in the relative sense of that expression, or he may require us to perform or abstain from certain actions, without assigning the proper grounds or reasons for the command. Such, for instance, the precept given to our first parents, in reference to the tree of good and evil seems to be. I shall not presume to determine whether there might not be some poisonous quality in the fruit which occasioned the command;" etc.

Can we reasonably suppose that a loving father who knew that his children were so ignorant and innocent as not to know the moral difference between good and evil, would jeopardize their welfare by needlessly placing them in circumstances of danger? If they were so totally devoid of intelligence as to be unconscious of right or wrong, they must have been equally ignorant concerning the nature of death, or the moral utility of obeying any command whatever; much less one for which no reason was or could be given. In such an unenlightened condition and limited knowledge of Deity, it is not surprising that Eve—with the promise of obtaining some information on the subject of Divinity, probably concluded that the Serpent was a god best calculated to meet the intellectual requirements of mankind. The absurdity of such a command, however, is manifest from the fact that the Lord must have foreknown that it could not have been obeyed, for lack of the requisite knowledge of good

and evil, or right and wrong, on the part of those to whom it was given.

The moral of this allegory forcibly illustrates the supposed virtuous necessity of perpetuating ignorance among the mass of people in ancient times. Instead of that disobedient act being the *Fall* of man, it was the *Rise* of man, for as yet he had nothing to fall from—being yet passive and without moral agency. Thus he took the first step that separated him from the brutal creation; which God immediately acknowledged by declaring that he had arisen to an equality with himself in moral intelligence. (Gen. 3: 22). Though he is said to have been originally made in the image of God, he did not, according to the text, become as God, until the Serpent caused him to become a sinner! for which, according to the poet,

“He then at him his thunders hurled,  
And for his sins he damned the world.”

## CHAPTER VII.

Narrative of Balaam and Balak—Nevin—Plutarch—Magee—Hort—Frey—Wines—Warburton—Smith—Ancient Sacrificing—Conquest of the Greeks under Alexander contrasted with that of the Hebrews under Joshua—Micaiah and the prophets of Baal—Worship of Baal confounded with that of Jehovah—Fuller—Gideon's Judgeship—Israel's perverseness—The Lord's anger with Israel—Strickland—Character of Balaam reviewed by various theologians.

And God came to Balaam at night, and said unto him, if the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them : and Balaam rose up in the morning and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. And God's anger was kindled because he went, (Num. 22 : 20—22). Unreasonable as the Hebrew writers represent the Lord to have been in his intercourse with them, it seems incredible that he should act so much at variance with sense and prudence as to become angry at a man for doing what he commanded him to do.

Dr. Nevin, in his "Guide to the Oracles," says, "It is true that God told Balaam to go, but as he was first positively forbidden to go, and, instead of obeying yielded to temptation;" etc. What a ridiculous assumption to infer that God would give a diverse command to a man in consequence of yielding to temptation, and at the same time hold him responsible for the first order ! Could it be that

God *Baal* told him to go, and God *Jehovah* became angry because he went at Baal's instigation with the intention of acting to the injury of his *chosen* people? In his anger at Balaam, God sent an angel to intercept his course; unto whom Balaam, after his arrest said, "If it displease thee I will get me back again." Thus it is clear from the manner of his expression, that he supposed himself to be acting in accordance with divine orders,—which is apparently confirmed by the command of the angel for him to proceed. This legend of antiquity inconsistently personates God as becoming angry at a man for an act which he openly sanctions by commanding him to perform.

From the manner which Balak sacrificed oxen on this occasion, when Balaam arrived, it is evident that it was a religious rite with the Moabites, and in practice among them before Moses instituted such ceremonies among the Israelites: and tends to confirm the opinion that the worship of the Moabites was the same as the Israelites, with the exception of such theistical ideas and tabernacle ceremonies as the Hebrew lawgiver had contrived.

Nevin, on the "Meaning and Origin of Sacrifice," in his "Biblical Antiquities," inquires—"Are we to imagine, that the Holy One could find satisfaction in the suffering of his harmless creatures? Could he be pleased, in itself, with the blood of bullocks and goats, or be soothed into complacency by the savour of their burning flesh? To these inquiries, all reason and natural sense answer, *No.*"

It is nevertheless clear that such was the impression of primitive worshippers, or the world would not have realized the happy results that are supposed to have been produced by the *sweet savour* that the Lord *smelled* when Noah sacrificed so many beasts to him after the Deluge, (Gen. 8: 21). And when Job vindicated his integrity, "The Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "my wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: . . . . Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering;" etc., (Job 42: 7, 8). Thus it is plain from scripture, that if the Lord is the *Holy One* that Nevin mentions, he must have found satisfaction, and been soothed into complacency by the burning of bullocks and rams. What an idea of the *Holy One*!

Sacrificing was also a Grecian ceremony of worship, as far back as the time of king Theseus. Plutarch, when speaking of the "War of the Amazons," says, "There was a long pause and delay before either would begin the attack. At last Theseus, by the direction of some oracle, offered a sacrifice to Fear, and after that immediately engaged." Prof. Hort, says, "The victims most commonly offered to Jupiter, were a goat, a sheep, or a white bull with gilded horns; and not unfrequently only flour, salt, or incense." By which it appears that their manner of sacrificing, previous to the development of Grecian literature, differed but little from the old Jewish custom.



Dr. Magee has endeavored to show that all nations before the time of Christ entertained the belief that the displeasure of an offended Deity was to be averted by animal sacrifice, and that to the shedding of blood they imputed pardon and reconciliation. But the Rev. J. S. C. Frey, on *Sacrifices*, makes some exceptions to this, and says, "Pythagoras and Plato spoke often with regret and displeasure of the sacrifices and blood of beasts." Thus in consistency with the religious impressions of the present day, as regards the necessity of such a mode of worship, the Grecian sages were more enlightened and advanced than Moses, or the prophets and priests of Israel. Though Alexander had such a philosophical tutor as Aristotle, nevertheless, after having landed his army in Asia, he is said to have sacrificed to *Minerva* on the fields of Illium, though dependent on the oracle of Jupiter Ammon.

Prof. Wines, in his "Commentaries on the Laws of the Ancient Hebrews," (p. 605), when distinguishing between the Hebrew and Grecian *Oracles*, says, "No money was ever received for consulting the Hebrew oracle. The Grecian oracles were sources of vast revenues to the priests." As the Jewish priesthood received one-tenth of the national income, they were placed in circumstances that enabled them to consult the oracle gratuitously, through bountiful legislation in their behalf on the part of the government. According to Morgan, (as quoted by Wines), "While the Jews were in Egypt they became dazzled by the infallible declarations of Ju-

piter Ammon." And which were doubtless as correct as the communications given through the oracle of Jehovah, for the supposed benefit of the equally superstitious Hebrews.

In comparing the martial propensity and conquering ability of the Grecians or Macedonians as led by the oracle of Jupiter Ammon, with that of the Hebrews as dictated by the oracle of Jehovah, we find that the latter, under Joshua, and the immediate supervision of the Lord—in conjunction with an army of *hornets* (Ex. 23: 28, Deut. 7: 20, Josh. 24: 12), commissioned expressly by him to assist in extirminating the Canaanites, and over 600,000 harnessed warriors of Israel, they succeeded in subjugating a small tract of territory, east of the Mediterranean sea—about equal in size to the state of New Hampshire—whose combined tribes could not muster half that number of men; whereas, Alexander, under the guidance of Jupiter and protection of Minerva—without any hornets, and but 35,000 men, not only overthrew the hosts of Persia and conquered the civilized world, but was instrumental in the hands of Jupiter of introducing to the people of Jehovah, the superior language and literature of Greece.

In maintaining that sacrificing was merely the result of natural religion, Bishop Warburton, says, "For had the original of sacrifice been prescribed, and directly commanded by the Deity, Moses never could have omitted the mention of that circumstance." Though he quotes from the *Philobiblius*

translation of Sanchoniatho—as given in Bryant's *Chapter* on human sacrifices, to show that the alleged command of God to Abraham was the origin of human sacrifices; yet he declares the whole system of vicarious atonement to be the very rubbish of Paganism, and condemned by the law of Nature; but nevertheless attempts to justify the horrible sacrifice on Calvary, because it is supposed to be typified by the Mosaic sacrifices; which he admits were only the result of natural religion. He argues that a human immolation in connection with the Jewish and Christian systems of worship is founded on *reason*, but *abusive* and *absurd*, when practiced in the offices of Paganism!

Concerning the originality of sacrifice, Dr. W. Smith in his "Old Testament History," says, "Animals must have been slain to provide the skins that clothed Adam and Eve; and wherefore slain, except in sacrifice?" From this we infer that sacrificing was an ordained institution and ceremony of worship before the fall of man; for it seems that when he fell, or transgressed, the skins of sacrificed animals were in readiness for the Lord to make their coats of!

In confounding the Hebrew idea of Deity with that of Pagan worship, we find that when Jehoshaphat invited the king of Israel to inquire at the word of the Lord concerning the success of their projected war against the Syrians, the prophets of Baal were immediately called upon for that purpose. They prophesied saying—"Go up to Ramoth

Gilead and prosper; for the Lord shall deliver it into the king's hand." (1 Kings 22: 6, 12). In placing the two systems in such mutual relationship, the writer blends the worship of Baal and that of Jehovah into the same religion. But Jehoshaphat having some peculiar and bigoted sectarian sentiment of his own on the subject, inquired if there was not a prophet of the Lord besides, that he might inquire of him also? And when Micaiah, the son of Imlah was called, and inquiry made of him concerning the result of their intended expedition, he said—"Go and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver it into the king's hand." Though this prediction was in accordance with what the prophets of Baal had foretold, yet he afterwards said—"If thou return in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me."

Micaiah—designated as a prophet of the Lord *besides*, seems to have been a deceitful mantologist who gave irreconcilable and unsatisfactory answers. As Ahab was slain in the battle, and victory gained by the Syrians, Ramoth Gilead did not fall into the king's hand according to his prophecy; and the result of the battle proves that he was possessed with no more prescience than the prophets of Baal, if he was a prophet of the Lord *besides*; and evidently as great an imposter as any of them. The propensity of this prophet for deceit and untruthfulness was such, that on one occasion he reported having seen a vision in which the Lord was influenced by a *lying* spirit, (1 Kings 22: 22). The revelator

John, says, "All liars shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone;" but according to Micaiah, there was *one* who had his *portion* around the throne of God, and the most influential councillor in the host of heaven!

Theologians have exerted their utmost capacities to reconcile scriptural discrepancies and theological perplexities of this kind, but they never have, nor ever can, until they obliterate from the human mind the power to discern between truth and fiction.

If the prophets of Baal had resorted to such duplicity as Micaiah, there would have been some plausible ground for believing that Baal was not as *true* a God as Jehovah, and his prophets *less* truthful.

The Hebrew writers also convey the idea that the Lord kept evil spirits about him for virtuous purposes. They speak of him sending one on different occasions as an ambassador to the earth, invested with power to annoy and distress his refractory subjects, (Judg. 9: 23, 1 Sam. 16: 14).

Albert Barnes says that the word *Baal*, in Hebrew, means Lord or Master: which confirms the belief that the Canaanites and Phoeniceans worshipped the same deity as the Hebrews—differing only in adhering to the old emblematical forms. The Assyrians and Babylonians were undoubtedly worshippers of the same God, with the name abbreviated to Bel; whose image was typically adored among them. The various other images used by ancient and modern polytheistic nations,

seem to have been, and continue to be merely superficial religious appendages in consistency with the devotional predilection of the worshippers, and the prevailing custom of the time.

"It is a dictate of reason, as well as of revelation," says that eminent non-conformist divine, Andrew Fuller, "that if the Lord be God, worship him, and if Baal, worship him." From this we infer that reason and revelation only *dictate* the duty of worshipping one or the other—leaving it undecided with the worshipper which is God, conclusively showing that it is a matter of no importance by what name he is adored.

After Gideon destroyed the altar of Baal, which his father had erected, and the grove in connection with it, he had the surname of Baal appended to his, by his father, in apparent honor of God *Baal*. (Judge 6: 32). This shows that there was nothing reproachful in assuming the Pagan name for deity; as he evinced no repugnance of feeling in receiving such an appellation of religious dignity for his valorous and enthusiastic conduct in the cause of God, by the name of Jehovah. But unfortunately for the worship of God, either by the name of Jehovah or Baal, Gideon subsequently requested the people to present him with their gold ear-rings for the purpose of making an *Ephod*, which, either designedly or otherwise, became an object of idolatry for all Israel during his life time; but was neglected after his death, when they made Baal Berith their God. (Judge 8: 33). Gideon's conceptions of



divine worship were such in the abstract, that by preferring an ephod to the name of either Baal or Jehovah, the narrative of his history, like that of Jephthah's, renders the Hebrew and Pagan systems of worship essentially the same.

After Gideon's political policy of transforming the Israelites into Ishmaelites, (Judg. 8: 24), and his religious administration of turning those *God chosen* people from Jehovah worship to *Ephod* adoration, the apostle Paul considered him sufficiently famous in the service of the Lord to have his name enrolled on the catalogue of the *faithful*, as having obtained a good report! (Heb. 11: 32, 39,) And after Jephthah's Heathen vow and corresponding conduct, he also supposed him worthy of having his name registered with the same class of worthies, in company with such a fabled hero as Samson; who, by yielding to his natural depravity, rendered life so burdensome to himself, that he embraced an opportunity to terminate his existence. Paul, by extolling a man to the *skies* who lived in terms of intimacy with a harlot, (Judge 16: 1)—was an unscrupulous liar and destroyer of others as well as himself—who unavoidably died with his sins unrepented of, shows a liberality of sentiment on the subject that may graciously be considered tantamount to Paganism.

After Balak's sacrificial offering, he wished to know of Balaam the word of the Lord in regard to having Israel cursed: when Balaam replied according to the word that the Lord had put into his mouth

—"That the Lord had not beheld iniquity in Jacob, nor hath he seen perverseness in Israel." (Num. 23: 21). Neither Baal or any other Pagan Deity could have put language into Balaam's mouth more contradictory to the history of those people than that. For they had been so incorrigibly perverse and ungovernable that the Lord had repeatedly expressed his desire to destroy the whole nation. In his anger at their iniquity and rebellion he had on different occasions sent the plague among them and destroyed them by thousands—the *fiery serpent* pestilence having just subsided when Balaam arrived in the land of Moab. And he had no sooner departed, than they went to committing whoredoms with the daughters of Moab, and sacrificing and bowing down to their gods; when 24,000 more of them are said to have fell victims to the wrath of the Lord. If the Lord had put the word into Balaam's mouth that he had seen *nothing but perverseness* in Israel, it would have been in better accordance with the concurrent testimony of their previous history.

Paul reduces the number of those who fell by the plague on this occasion to 23,000; which discrepancy, Dr. A. Clarke endeavors to reconcile by supposing that Phinehas and his companions must have slain a thousand, which were not included by Paul. Though if such were the case, they could have fell only by legalized murder, and not died of the plague, according to the language of the text, (Num. 25: 9).

The wrath of the Lord was so terrible on this occasion, that in order to have it turned away from the people, he commanded Moses to take all their heads and hang them up before him against the sun! (Num. 25: 4). This calamity Moses takes liberty to ascribe to the counsel of Balaam—though not justified by the narrative; and attempts to make it appear that it was a curse sent upon them by means which Balaam, according to his own allegation, was powerless to perform. For in reply to Balak's importunity to have Israel cursed, he said if he would give him his house full of silver and gold, he could not go beyond the commandment of the Lord. As he was without doubt an avaricious man, such an expression may be considered the most potential language that he could possibly make use of to prove that he did not feel at liberty to act detrimental to those people. Thus, if this national calamity—resulting from the immorality of the people, was the result of Balaam's curse or advice, it could only have occurred with the consent and approbation of the Lord: and the great amount of *wrath* that he relieved himself of in the destruction of so many people, was apparently the result of his own acquiescence in the malediction or advice of Balaam.

Moses, in a subsequent rehearsal of their history, (Deut. 23: 5), says that the Lord turned this curse into a blessing, because he loved them. Such *love* as would incite the Lord to command all the heads of the people to be hung up before him against the

sun, and the judges to slay every one his men, we would naturally suppose hard to appreciate!

Dr. Strickland, on "Biblical Ethnography," says, "Balaam, after receiving two messages and a liberal promise of reward, undertook to curse them, but was forbidden by the Lord. He however gave them advice of the most wicked character, which proved infinitely worse than any verbal curse." If the Lord could prevent a verbal curse from Balaam, why could he not counteract the accomplishment and effect of what was infinitely worse? The verbal curse could not have been productive of any disastrous consequences—and in fact would have amounted to nothing; and the historian by representing the Lord to have been so careful in averting the utterance of a superstitious oral curse, and being regardless in preventing a national calamity; conveys an idea of him by no means superior to mythological romance.

In regard to the character and religion of Balaam, Warburton says that his language—"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his;" is understood as a wish that he might be partaker with the righteous in another life. Though he admits that Moses never taught future existence, yet he confesses that a belief in life hereafter is declared in the language of this Chaldean diviner. But Bishop Horsley, in his "Biblical Criticism," (vol. 4, p. 400), confutes this view by saying, "The wish of Balaam had no respect to the state of his mind on his death-bed, in prospect of

futurity ; but merely to the fortunes of Abraham, the ancestor of the Israelites in this world ;" etc. By which he acknowledges that Abraham and his descendents—the Israelites, had no prospects or faith in regard to future life, and is not willing to admit that even Pagans had.

Prof. Edwards, in speaking of the joyful notice that was taken of the incarnation of Christ by the Shepherds and others to whom it was first announced, says, "Some think they were instructed by the prophecy of Balaam, who lived in the eastern parts, and who foretold Christ's coming as the star that should arise out of Jacob ;" etc. This Oriental diviner, then, by describing the token by which the advent of Christ was first signalized, places Paganism in advance of Judaism in prognostication. And Bishop Newton on the *Prophecies*, in demonstrating the truthfulness of Balaam's predictions, places Pagan soothsayers on an equality with Hebrew prophets in prescience, by saying that "it is not always necessary for prophets to be good men."

Archbishop Ushur, pronounces Balaam a wizzard; Origen says, his whole power consisted in cursing and magic; Calmet says, he was famous for predictions, and Bishop Lowth, remarks, that he knows of nothing more exquisite or beautiful in the whole scope of Hebrew poetry than the prophecy of Balaam. Theodoret is of opinion that he did not consult the Lord, but was supernaturally inspired, and constrained to speak against his own inclination. Cyril, says, he was a magician, an idolator and false

prophet, who spoke truth against his own will. Ambrose compares him to Caiaphas, who prophesied without being aware of the import of what he said. Austin, Jerome, Dr. Jortin, and commentators in general have adopted the Jewish opinion that he was a prophet of the Lord corrupted by avarice. Edward Harold Browne, B. D., on *Inspiration*, thinks that his extraordinary knowledge could not have been the result of the purity of his heart.

Though Balaam uses the Hebrew name for Deity in his intercourse with Balak, it is not to be supposed that he recognized any difference in the synonymous terms of *Lord* and *Baal*; and if the narrative had been handed down from the pen of a Pagan, the name of the latter would undoubtedly have been used. But let him be what he may in his personal character and form of worship, it is transparent to the unprejudiced reader, that his history in relation to the Israelites—and the fear that the Jehovistic mythologist represents the Lord to have evinced of his curse upon them, unequivocally confounds the worship of Baal with that of Jehovah; and renders the two systems identical. Where such diversity of opinion exists among expositors in regard to the capacity and moral reputation of a man whose history is so ambiguous as that of Balaam, perhaps there would be no great risk in assigning the whole story a place among the fabulous legends of antiquity.



## CHAPTER VIII.

Slaughter of the Midianites—God's partiality for Moabites—Israel, and the Lord avenged of Midian—De Witt—Inspiration—Davidson—Chillingworth—Lee—Barnes—Watson—Colenso—Israelites compared with Pagans in dedicating spoils to the Deity—Leslie—Martineau—Miller—Keightley—Priestley—McCarthy—Hull—Dick—Nelson—Moses compared with Aristomenes—Philip of Macedon—Achan and his children—Plundering by the Israelites consistent with their ideas of God—Divine Pymander—Gray—Incompatibility of the Mosaic idea of Deity with the present age—Arminius—Jews and Mormons compared.

“The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites, afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people,” (Num. 31 : 1, 2). By the use of such language, the writer represents the Lord to have been so vindictive that he did not feel willing to let Moses die before he had seen vengeance taken on the Midianites. Yet these civil people had done nothing more than what they supposed to be the most effectual means of securing their lives and property—the same as the Israelites or any other people in that age might have done under similar circumstances. Though they in reality seem to have become the objects of Israel malice through the intrigue of Balak, king of Moab; who is said to have procured some women of that nation, as well as his own, to decoy Israel into lewdness. And the terrible retribu-

tion which followed, all fell upon the Midianites. Contrary to justice and reason, no spirit of retaliation was manifested toward Balak, or the Moabites, who were the primal actors in the scheme which resulted so tragically for the Midianites. This forbearance appears to have been in consequence of an alleged command of the Lord, given to Moses not to contend with them in battle, nor distress them, as he did not intend to give them their land for a possession; because he had previously given Ar unto the children of Lot, (Deut. 2 : 9). This command not to distress the Moabites, or possess their lands, throws ambiguity on the whole story of Balak's extreme anxiety to have Israel cursed; for the Israelites had displayed no hostile intentions or ill feeling towards them. And as they were disposed to be friendly with Balak and his people, while he held them in aversion and contempt, it shows in what estimation the roving Israelites were looked upon by civilized nations.

From this part of Israel's history it appears that the Lord had some choice people whom he located in that country in a former age, and whose king was now an open and avowed enemy of the Israelites. Those Moabites, together with the Ammonites and Edomites, were colonized in that land by the Lord in an earlier period of history, after assisting them in disposessing and driving out the aborigines, on the same principle that he was then about to help the Israelites in destroying and expelling the inhabitants of Canaan, (Deut. 2 : 19—22. As there is no

account of him ever getting *angry* at them for their idolatry and worship of Baal, the conclusion is that their system of religious worship was in harmony with his feeling,—substantially confirmed by his declining to take offence at Balak's importunity with Balaam to have Israel cursed.

As these Moabites were the descendents of drunken and incestuous Lot, and the Midianites included among the posterity of God's favorite man Abraham, his partiality for the former is rather inconsistent, when we take the historic fact into consideration that the women of those people participated in the same licentiousness charged against the Midianites.

"And Moses spake unto the people saying, arm some of yourselves unto the war, and let them go out against the Midianites, and avenge the Lord of Midian," (Num. 31 : 3). Thus according to the history, the Lord first spake to Moses, saying—"Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites;" but now Moses speaks to the people by commanding them to *avenge the Lord of Midian*. From this we plainly perceive, that in accordance with their general conduct in relation to Deity, he was merely a synonyme of the opinion entertained of themselves—they manifestly being in their own estimation his representative.

If the religious proclivities of those people led them to adore such an assumed agency personated in themselves in consistency with their natural character, as *God*, it is obvious to every philanthropist

that their rude notions of a divine Being have become outgrown in the present advanced age. Though the God-idea of the Old Testament was one of jealousy and war, anger and revenge; while the New Testament writers have held forth the opposite doctrine of peace, love and mercy, charity and benevolence, yet Dr. De Witt, on the "Objections Urged Against the Bible,"—in defence of the whole volume says, "Here is a book from these different persons, who lived unknown to each other, and scattered over the period of about fifteen hundred years, in which they all utter the same doctrine relative to Deity and man; to time and eternity. And there is not a contradiction or even a dissension in sentiment among them over the whole extent of their pages." As the critical spirit had not developed itself in that age, writers did not claim to dissent from those who preceded them, but it is plain to be seen that the feeling and sentiment inculcated by the first Bible writer toward other nations in connection with his religious and moral precepts, and the doctrine taught by the last writers of the book, is more at variance than the religious teachings of any Pagan nation on record.

Moses is said to have been inspired by Jehovah, when giving his laws, Minos by Jupiter, Lycurgus by Apollo, Zaleucus by Minerva, Numa by Egeria, and so on; but how the God of *love* that inspired John—the last bible writer, to produce his epistles, can be identified as the angry, jealous, and fighting God of Moses—the first bible writer, is a perplexity

that can only be obviated by supposing him to be changeable, and inclined to model his inspirations in accordance with the religious impressions of the writer. This view is apparently ratified by Dr. Davidson, when he says, "It seems necessary for the interpreter to attend to the changing aspect of the Hebrew language, and to mark the distinctive peculiarities of each period. The phases of diction which distinguish one author from another, and even the peculiar genius of contemporary writers should be carefully noted; since the early life, the education, the habits, influence the modes of thought, and consequently their diction." But to reconcile the antithesis of sentiment and *diction* expressed by the last biblical writers with the first, in regard to the qualities and nature of God, is a task that defies hermeneutical conciliation.

Dr. Chillingworth seems to think this subject is made a topic of more concern than there is any necessity for, by saying, "When the first books of the Old Testament were written, they did not exclude unwritten traditions nor the authority of the church to decide controversies; and who hath then so altered their nature, and filled them with such jealousies, as that now they cannot agree for fear of mutual disparagement?" Prof. Lee, on the "Inspiration of Scripture," also says, "It is plain that the primitive Christians did not consider the Apostles alone qualified to compose inspired documents; for were such the belief, how can we account for the

reception of the gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke? . . Irenaeus, (A. D. 167), describes the apocryphal gospels as being countless in number." As the extant canonical ones are merely fragmentary, and by no means in harmony with each other, the conclusion is that their *inspiration* is no better vouched for than that of the rejected and lost ones.

Albert Barnes, on the "Evidences of Christianity in the Nineteenth Century," in his remarks on the statement of some, that the inspiration of the Bible writers was nothing more to them than what the falling apple was to Newton, or the operation of steam was to Watt—and to be accounted for on the same principle, says, "Such persons—and there are many now—like Theodore Parker, and like Renan, who do not deny the inspiration of the Bible, but it is inspiration such as was in Burns or in Bacon; in Homer or in Milton; in Dante or in Michael Angelo, Shakspeare and Isaiah, Kant and Paul, differ only in degree." And unfortunately for orthodoxy, in consequence of so much of the biblical inspiration concerning Deity being so seriously in conflict with reason and modern intuition, the *many* of which he speaks, are continually receiving into their ranks from all creeds, the most progressive and philosophical adventurers in the cause of philanthropy and human advancement.

Of the whole amount of spoil taken from the Midianites in their destruction, one half—including 16,000 young females, was given to Eleazer and the priesthood for a heave offering unto the Lord, in



accordance with their sacerdotal requirements; and the other half assigned to the congregation of the people: except a small portion which was appropriated directly to the Lord. His tribute of the sheep was six hundred three score and fifteen; his tribute of the beeves was three score and twelve; of the asses three score and one; and of the captives his tribute was thirty-two young maidens, (Num. 31: 37—40). Thus with their atrocious and pillaging policy toward the Midianites, and division of the plunder among themselves and their rude ideas of God, their history clearly proves them to have been in conjunction with Jehovah, but little else than a ruthless band of unmitigated land-pirates; whose barbarous conduct, as Gibbon remarks, is read more with awe than satisfaction by pious Christians of the present day.

Bishop Watson, in his "Apology for the Bible," in *Reply* to the "Age of Reason," when giving his views concerning the butchery of the defenceless Midianite women and children—with the *veil* of Moses drawn piously over his face, declares that he can see nothing but "good policy combined with mercy in the transaction." May heaven save us from falling victims to his kind of mercy! If in a dispensation of Providence, he had been a descendant of Abraham by Keturah—as these people were, can we suppose that he would consider it "good policy combined with mercy" to have his widow and a portion of his children (if he had any), served in the same manner, while the remainder of them

were subjected to slavery, after he had been slain by a gang of merciless marauders? He is not willing to admit that those selected females were reserved for the purpose of debauchery, as his opponent (Paine) and other writers have assumed, but acknowledges that they were spared for the purpose of being devoted to what he calls the *abhorrent* system of slavery. He has the candor to admit that the proceedings of Moses—as *inspired* by the Lord, were abhorrent to the feelings of humanity; by which he appears to have progressed sufficiently in civilization to see the abomination of slavery, but could gracefully sanction an atrocious butchery of helpless females and unoffending children, in consequence of not being able to renounce his preconceived prejudices respecting the divine authority of a book that was written in a mytho-tragical period of the world in accordance with the instinct and religious zeal of the author.

Bishop Colenso, in commenting on this massacre, takes a more enlightened view of the subject, and in his *Pentateuch*, (vol. 1, chap. 22), says, “We may fairly reckon that there were as many more under the age of forty, and half as many more above forty, making altogether 80,000 females, of whom, according to the story, Moses ordered 48,000 to be killed, besides, (say) 20,000 young boys. The tragedy of Cawnpore, where 300 were butchered, would sink into nothing compared with such a massacre, if indeed we were required to believe it.”

The author of the “*Vestiges of Creation*,” says

"It has of late been a favorite notion with many, that the human race was at first in a highly civilized state, and that barbarism was a second condition. This probably took its origin in a wish to support certain interpretations of the Mosaic record," etc. In consistency with such a view, it is conclusively that if the human race had ever been in a more enlightened condition, God could not have failed to adopt a more humane course to have them restored to civilization than the rude system enacted through the legislation of Moses.

In investigating the Mosaic record Colenso says, "I have become engaged in this inquiry from no wish or purpose of my own, but from the plain necessities of my position as a missionary Bishop. I feel, however, that I am only drawn in with the stream, which in this our age is setting steadily in this direction, and swelling visibly from day to day. What the end may be, God only, the God of Truth, can foresee. Meanwhile believing and trusting in his guidance, I have launched my bark upon the flood, and am carried along by the waters. Most gladly would I have turned away from all such investigations as these, if I could have done so,—as, in fact, I did, until I could do so no longer."

After the execution of such unfeeling and bloody commands as Moses gave concerning those unfortunate Midianites, he no doubt felt prepared to be *gathered to his people*, according to the word of the Lord. Which Hebrew phraseology of being gath-

ered to their *people* or *fathers* merely seems to have signified the giving up of this life and being placed in the grave; as there is never any mention of such an idea as that of a future life in connection with that important physiological change, in any of the Mosaic records. Yet such is the orthodox veneration for the *inspired* effusions of Moses, that Dr. Gaussen in his *Theopneustia*, says, "But what more holy and divine, in the whole Old Testament, than the writings of that man of God? He was in such sort a prophet that his holy books are placed above all the rest," etc.

Notwithstanding the inhumanity of Moses and the natural hardness of his heart, he deservedly takes rank among the great moral reformers of antiquity. During forty years residence with Jethro—who was in Arabia what Melchisedec had formerly been in Canaan, the Abrahamic idea of God—which the Israelites had lost sight of during their residence in Egypt, was embraced by him and taught to his people with an austerity that Abraham never dreamed of. In slaying *all* the males of Midian, his own father-in-law whose advice he accepted in the judicial government of the people, (Ex. 18), must have been one of the victims, if he had not previously died. This would seem perfectly outrageous. But unfortunately for the authenticity of the historic narrative, these Midianites, soon after the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites, were sufficiently powerful to hold the Israelites with their reputed 600,000 warriors in subjection,

(Judg. 6: 1). This gives quite an air of romance to the history of these *God chosen* people.

The Rev. W. G. Clarke—Vice Master of Trinity College, Cambridge—in a recent *Pamphlet* on the “Present Dangers of the Church of England,” acknowledges that criticism has demonstrated that there are numerous historical errors in the Bible, and many narratives, purporting to be actual occurrences, which show unmistakable marks of legend.

Prof. Martineau, when reviewing the works of Comte, Mill, Spencer, and others, in his “*Essays Philosophical and Theological*,” (vol. 1, p. 327), says, “For ourselves, we feel little doubt that such criticism will show a large admixture of untrustworthy elements in the narrative of both Old and New Testaments; and that if it prove so, the mere emancipation of the intellect from what seems purely literary superstition as to the truth of the Bible narratives, will probably bring far more gain to the spiritual freedom of man, and do far more to direct attention to the spiritual evidences of divine truth, than any other result could educe. We believe Bibliolatry has been, and is likely to be, the bane of Protestant Christianity.” In accepting the Greek conception of a divine order in man and the universe, and the Christian theological assumption of the Lord’s controversy with man; he inquires how the two are to be reconciled? But if a large admixture of untrustworthy element is to be admitted in the narratives of the Old and New Testa-

ments, what becomes of the *infallible* authority for any spiritual evidence of the Lord's *controversy* with man, which he maintains will be elicited by such philological criticism?

Hugh Miller—whose *geological* labors stand conspicuous in defence of old theology—in his "Footprints of the Creator," remarks that religion has lost its dependence on metaphysical theories, and must henceforth maintain itself upon the domain of physical science. Consequently he warns the guardians of sacred truth to prepare themselves for the approaching crisis in its history, by exchanging the study of thoughts, for the apprehension of things, and cultivating the habit of inductive research.

Keightley, in his "Mythology of Ancient Greece and Italy," says, "The legends which compose a nation's mythology may be divided into two classes. The first will contain the true or fabulous events which are believed to have occurred either among the people itself, as its own adventures, and those of its princes and heroes, which may be called *domestic*; and those of ancient or distant nations, handed down by tradition or brought home by voyagers, which we may entitle *foreign*." Thus those fabulous occurrence which are supposed to have taken place in connection with the history of the Israelites,—such as traveling dry shod through the Red sea; being supplied with a shower of quails in the wilderness that covered the ground two cubits high for the space of a day's journey on two



sides; (Num. 11: 31), and destroying whole nations without losing a man, may, on the same principle and with equal propriety, be termed *domestic*, while the Mosaic account of those early legends of the Creation and Deluge, which were received from tradition, may justly be entitled *foreign*.

In dividing the spoil that the Israelites obtained by the destruction of the Midianites, the Lord of course got the gold, silver, and valuables; which, according to their custom, required purifying in the fire, or *water of separation*, before it was considered fit to be dedicated to him. This, in superstitious absurdity excelled the religious fanaticism of all Pagan nations, who were in like manner accustomed to dedicating spoils to the Deity. As an instance that this custom was common among nations contemporary with the Israelites, we read that when Demosthenes, the Athenian General, (not the orator), returned from a successful campaign in Acarnania, he had a selection of the spoils deposited in the temples and dedicated to the Deity. "This," says a worthy historian, "was through mistaken gratitude and a false religion." But to what else than a "mistaken gratitude and false religion," can we attribute the conduct of Moses and the Israelites, in assigning to their tutelar god Jehovah a portion of their plunder?

Dr. Leslie, says, "For as the devil does ape God in his institutions of religion, his feasts, sacrifices, &c.; so false religion is but a corruption of the true" But *true* religion, according to the apostle

James, (1: 27), is not to be found among people who give such a record of their conduct as the Israelites under Moses.

Robbing other nations of their gold and silver for the supposed purpose of gratifying their God, was carried to the greatest extreme by king David. He says, "Now behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver;" &c., (1. Chron. 22: 14). This fabulous sum, which would amount in our currency to four thousand three hundred and five million dollars, he could only have obtained by plundering other nations in his aggressive wars; as he was but a poor shepherd boy raised up to rule over a people who had been plundered themselves, during the previous reign, by the Philistines and Ammonites.

The treasures in the temple of Delphi—the chief seat of the Grecian oracle in the early period of the Phocion government, amounted, according to the best calculations to the value of nine million dollars in our currency; which was considered the property of the Deity. This, though, was not altogether the accumulation of plunder taken in war, as a considerable part of it was an offering or present of Croesus king of Lydia. The account of the wealth contained in the Grecian temple—which consisted in ingots of gold, and ornamental works in precious metal, such as tripods, vases, statues, etc.; comes within the bounds of reason; but the account which the biblical historian gives of the

accumulation of David, is out of all character for that age of the world, when the precious metals were so scarce in comparison with what they are now.

Of what use would such spoil as the Israelites dedicated to Jehovah be of to the God whom Christians worship? It is an item of interest to the curious to know how long seventy-two beeves would continue to furnish *the table of the Lord!* and still more desirable to know what use he made of those thirty-two young maidens; for which he merits laudable commendation for having been so moderate in his demands—being but one out of a thousand of the whole number saved from destruction. Some idea of their supposed use may be derived from Colenso when he inquires—“How can it be possible to quote the Bible as in any way condemning slavery, when the Lord received a tribute of thirty-two slaves! As subsequent commands in the history of these people required an indiscriminate slaughter of every living thing, and “nothing saved alive that breatheth,” (Deut. 20 : 16), the conclusion is that the Lord must have got a surfeit of beef, and virgins also.

Dr. Priestly, on the *Evidences*, says, “It is well known that, in general the heathens ascribed to their gods the passions and actions of men, and too many of the oriental princes, and those most celebrated for their warlike and other exploits, gave into the extreme of both cruelty and lust.” How strikingly we see this heathen character exempli-

fied in the conduct of Moses and the Israelites in their conceptions of Deity! Their history proves to demonstration that they supposed God to lust for such spoils as their bloody thieving and robbery deprived others of.

But how disreputable the policy of Moses in reserving those females for slavery, in comparison with Aristomenes, the Messinian leader! When he entered Caryae, his young body-guard took captive some maidens, who, according to their custom, were engaged in worshipping Diana. Aristomenes observing that they were not treated with proper respect, exclaimed to his men, "Forbear! are you not ashamed to disgrace yourselves by affronting those defenceless females? Remember you are Greeks, the most humane people on earth, and not barbarians. Protect, and not insult those unhappy women, and treat them as brothers would." His remonstrance not taking effect on some who had been indulging too freely in the use of wine, he laid the refractory ones dead on the spot, and sent the maidens back to their parents. History is abundant in instances where there was more humanity and generosity shown to captives taken by Heathen conquerors, than was displayed by the Israelites as incited by their ideas of God. When Philip, king of Macedon defeated the Athenians under Demosthenes, he not only dismissed the captives without ransom, but furnished clothing to such as were in need of it.

In a recent discussion between the Rev. R. D. Mc-

Carthy, and Rev. D. W. Hull, on the *divinity* of the Bible, the former, in refering to the destruction of the Midianite women and children, asserted that the women were a set of harlots, and were destroyed by order of Moses for seducing the Israelites. His opponent maintained that there was no proof of their being harlots, and even if there was, a lascivious people had no right to become their murderers to prevent the consequences of their own unbridled licentiousness. And also furnished scriptural testimony that the Israelites abounded with harlots, or the priests would not have been forbidden in the Law to contract marriages with them, (Levit. 21: 14).

To show what regard God had for his Law on that subject, the record says he commanded the prophet Hosea, (1: 2), to go and take a wife of the whoredoms. But whether she deserted him, or he forsook her, the account does not state; but the Lord does not seem to have been satisfied with his living without a woman, so he again said, "Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress," &c., (Hos. 3: 1). As there was no command to marry, or take the second one for a wife, he bought her from the man who claimed her, for fifteen pieces of silver and part trade in barley,—her former owner no doubt congratulating himself or having made a good sale! Though Calvin, (as quoted from Bishop Horne's *Criticism* on Hosea), remarks, that it was only half price for a female

slave. This we might suppose rather cheap to be good. However, after having got her, he admonished her not to play the harlot and be for other men, but to abide for him many days. (Hos. 3: 3).

Dr. Dick, in his "Philosophy of the Future State," when narrating the terrible carnage and destruction that has occurred among mankind during the history of the human race, under such conquering and devastating chieftains as Tamerlane, Genghis Khan, Alaric and numerous other military leaders,—for the purpose of contrasting the disordered state of the moral world with the perfection and order that prevails in the physical and material system; either designedly or otherwise, neglected to notice the inhuman example set by Moses, as being in harmony with the views of his war God, and which for lack of human feeling is scarcely surpassed in Heathen warfare. His conception of God and war, compares not unfavorably with the Scandinavian idea of *Thor*, who was worshiped as the God of battles, and plunder, in congruity with their barbarous proclivities.

The Rev. D. Nelson, in his "Cause and Cure of Infidelity," when attempting to prove the righteousness of the Israelite's mode of fighting over that of other nations, states that the generals of antiquity lauded their soldiers with repeated applause when they gained a victory in battle. But in relation to the Israelites he says, "The nation of Israel were told that they did nothing, and God did all. That God fought for them, and that by themselves



they were worthless," etc. He was not able to see that they were only making *God* of themselves; and in contradiction to what he advances in their defence, we find that in the victories of the Israelites, even the women out of all the cities of the nation, came singing and dancing with their musical instruments, saying that Saul had slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands, without giving God any praise whatever for their success in fighting, (1 Sam. 18: 6, 7). Nelson, after reading the works of Virgil and Horace, handed him by a Princeton student, in a *Note* says, "The church honored the Heathen songs more than the infidels, because they could read them with more ability, and were more capable of appreciating their beauties." Thus *infidels* can honor and appreciate the *songs* of the Israelite women in the time of Saul and David, more than the song of Deborah and Barak, because they had become sufficiently advanced to know that the men had to do the fighting themselves.

After Joshua had taken command of the Israelites, on their anticipated capture of Jericho, they were forbidden to take any of the spoil, as it was pronounced an accursed thing; except the silver and gold, and certain valuable vessels which were consecrated to the Lord, (Josh. 6: 18, 19). There was one man, however, who disobeyed the order, and was consequently put to death, together with his innocent children, as incited by their merciless ideas of God,—though in direct violation of his

Law, which says, "Neither shall children be put to death for the sins of their fathers," (Deut 24: 16). The next town they came to and captured, they were allowed the privilege of taking all the spoil they chose as a prey unto themselves. It was not considered an *accursed* thing then, when under their new leader, spoiling and "wholesale" plundering had become legalized. But their plundering, in reality, was nothing better than what they had recently in a barbarous manner put a man and his family to death for, in accordance with an ancient rude notion that bloody deeds were productive of benign results. As a consequence of the barbarous act, the Lord, then, according to their ideas, "*turned* from the fierceness of his anger," (Josh. 7: 26). The bloody laws of Draco in Greece—which were abolished by Solon, did not surpass that of the Israelites in severity, if not in their moral result.

Their rude conduct is not surprising when we take the obvious fact into consideration, that the cardinal feature and main object of Mosaic jurisprudence was to show the absolute necessity of unconditional submission to despotism, irrespective of either justice, mercy or humanity. These people on entering Canaan considered themselves licensed pillagers in consistency with their avaricious propensities, under the alleged sanction and control of what they feigned to be *God*; which the unprejudiced reader of their history will readily perceive was merely an expanded mental image of themselves. The original Mosaic language—"And God, said, let us

make man in our own image;" seems to be diversely rendered in the Hebrew text, and to read consistent with the historic career of its reputed author, and the people for whom he made laws, should be translated—"And *man* said let us make God in our own image." For it is clear that the primitive author of that language possessed no more knowledge of what God said than men do now, nor proved himself to be any more theosophical than people who are influenced by modern intuitions of Divinity; while he displayed a deplorable deficiency in those generous and humane qualities now universally espoused by philanthropists.

As Moses was considered well qualified to legislate for the Israelites in consequence of being learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, (Acts 7: 22), he perhaps borrowed that expression in regard to the making of man from the *Divine Pyramander* of Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus; which book was evidently written centuries before the time of Moses, and may justly challenge a place in antiquity anterior to all other books in the world. The following extract from it conclusively shows from what source of information Moses wrote; "The Father of all things, the Divine Mind, being life and light, brought forth *man*, like unto himself, whom he loved as his proper offspring; for he was all-beautiful, having the *image* of his Father." Dr. Gray, in his "Heathen and Jewish Literature," says that this Egyptian philosophical priest and law-giver was so named in allusion to his pre-eminent character, and

the reputation which he had acquired in proclaiming the doctrine of the Trinity. He is said by Sanchoniatho to have been an assistant to Chromas, whom Cumberland supposes to have been Ham. According to others he lived in the time of Abraham or Osiris, and composed many works on theology, from which Sanchoniatho and Manetho obtained much of their information relating to the creation of the world. Though the Pymander is charged by some Christian apologists with being spurious, yet Lactantius has referred to those fragments which he has preserved, as a genuine record.

Dr. Harris in his "Man Primeval," says, "The apparent tautology of the phrase, *Let us make man in our own image*, denotes more emphatically, according to the Hebrew idiom, the pre-eminent moral resemblance of man to God." This view is certainly appropriate to the Hebrew conception of Deity; but may heaven save coming generations for such a *moral resemblance* to God as was displayed in the egregious and aggressive conduct of Moses and his people! This manner of judging of the attributes of God, among Christians, is shown by Arminius, on the "Nature of God," (vol. 2), when he says, "As we are not able to know the nature of God, in itself, we can, in a measure, attain to some knowledge from the analogy of the nature which is in ourselves, who are created after the image of God." How visionary the idea to say that we are created after the *image* of God, when he never had any image or form!

In our attendance at Bible Class, the wars of the Israelites in connection with the conquest of Canaan, on one occasion came under notice, when we inquired of the Pastor in charge, what humanity or religious consistency there was in spoiling and destroying on the principle adopted by them? His manner of replying indicated that he either considered the question impertinent or out of place; but said he could not tell what, or why it should be so for any other reason than that God had so ordered it. His apparent satisfaction and sincerity on the subject convinced us that he really believed such a partial, bloody, and aggressive imaginary existence, as the selfish and hostile leader of Israel in his semi-barbarous religious fanaticism feigned to be Deity, constituted a principle sufficiently *divine*, to be an object of adoration in an age like the present.

To illustrate more clearly the Israelite idea of God in connection with the treatment of Achan and his children, under the martial law of Joshua, we will suppose an autocrat to grant permission to a favorite barbarous subject to break into another man's dwelling—toward whom he entertained no good feeling, for the purpose of murdering the family and destroying the property, with the exception of certain valuable articles which were to be secured for the use of the said despot. But the man in performing his nefarious work, finds some articles that he covets himself, and consequently secretes them away for his own special benefit: but

on discovery of his avarice and disobedience, forfeits his life, together with that of his family. The ruler then gives liberty to another subject to enter another dwelling on the same burglarious principle, with the privilege of appropriating to his own use all the spoil he chose without reserve. Such is the quality and attributes of the impelling motive that instigated the Israelites to their deeds of cruelty and robbery—portrayed by them to be Deity. And to this uncivilized notion, the evangelical churches are still adhering with as much apparent satisfaction as if it was the most spiritually enlightened, and consistent view of a Divine Being that could be conceived in an age progressive in humanity and intelligence.

The *Universe*, (May 5, 1870), says, "The baneful effects of the monotheism of the Jews made itself apparent from the first moment of its existence. Assuming that one great central being ruled all things, they modestly laid it down that the descendants of Abraham were his only people; and, in this view of the case secured to themselves as it were, the right to rob and plunder, and murder all who were not of their race; an assertion which is verified in almost every page of their history. . . . The existence of the supreme power that manifested itself in the bloody solstice of Joshua, is quite apocryphal, in the opinion of Professor Silliman, of Yale College, as well as in that of many others of less exalted attainments."

Recently, while we were listening to a Mormon



Elder holding forth to a skeptical audience, he made the inquiry why it was that they as a people were so unpopular? He answered the question by saying that it was because of their peculiar belief; in which he justified themselves by stating that God's chosen people of old were noted for their peculiar belief in connection with their worship. There was no difficulty in agreeing with him in regard to that point so far as their ideas of God were concerned; though the conclusion was that they might be more liberal and less hostile than those semi-civilized people whom they took for their example, they were none the less enthusiastic in their apparently deluded views. For there is as good evidence that Joe Smith received his *plates* from the hand of the angel, as there is that Moses received his *tables* from the hand of the Lord; and that he was equally as religious a man. And the Mormons appear as despicable now in the estimation of the world at large, as the Jews were in days of yore. But their prospect for exerting such a pernicious influence in moulding the religious character of future generations looks rather precarious at present.

The transcendental current into which popular opinion is now rapidly drifting, furnishes indubitable evidence that a system of theology founded on and still supported by such outrageous and sacrilegious proceedings as marked the career of those presumptuous Israelites, who were apparently devoid of psychological perception and undeveloped

in pneumatology, stands in jeopardy of falling before the powerful artillery that the light of modern science, combined with spiritual and intellectual development, are bringing to bear upon it from the standpoint of reason, philanthropy, and general intelligence. For the time is evidently fast approaching when all systems of religion will be arraigned at the tribunal of science, when such as are dependent on the authority of tradition alone, without any foundation on the principles of Nature, will be assigned a place among the "fossils" of ancient mythology.

## CHAPTER IX.

Judaism and Paganism blended together in the narrative of  
Jonah—Kitto—W. Smith—Mosheim—Hengstenberg—Stan-  
ley—Williams—The prophet Samuel—Davidson—P. Smith  
—Repentance changed from God to man.

In the history of Jonah we have a striking illustration of the mobility and local nature of the Hebrew idea of Deity in adaptation to Paganism. According to the narrative, that prophet was reluctant to go and proclaim overthrow and ruin to the Ninevites, because he was satisfied in his mind that no such predicted disaster would take place according to the word of the Lord, (Jon. 4: 2). But according to the account, the Lord was determined in his purpose to make him go and announce to the people of Nineveh what the subsequent history proves to have been a manifest untruth. There was no proviso made for salvation, or revocation of the decree on the ground of repentance—that not being a specified requirement; but the edict was positive and unconditional. “Forty days and Nineveh *shall* be overthrown:” which, as Jonah anticipated did not accordingly take place. Jonah, like any prudent man, possessed too much self-respect to risk the reproach of being impugned as a lying or false prophet, if he could possibly avoid such disgrace. And to avert the infamy of having his veracity impeached, and his reputation as a true

prophet blemished, he embarked on ship-board, and sailed for Tarshish; under the impression that in so doing he would elude the presence and knowledge of the God of Israel; whom he seems to have supposed was endeavoring to coerce him into measures detrimental to his honor and integrity.

As he was a prophet of the Lord, we are justifiable in supposing that he must have entertained correct views of his capacities and attributes. From his course of procedure, it is clear that he only considered him a local Deity of their own, whose presence and ruling influence was not felt or acknowledged beyond his prescribed national jurisdiction. Tarshish—the place for which he was bound, being in his estimation within the appropriate limits, and under the religious government of some other national Deity. He appears to have had no more idea of God's omnipresence than the prophet Amos, (3: 2), had of his omniscience, when he gives it as a declaration of the Lord, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." That the omnipresence of the Jewish God was not admitted or believed in by the Hebrew writers, is conclusive from the use of such language as—"And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod." And the Nodites—whom Josephus states lived innocently and generously before he introduced his cunning craftiness among them—were dependent on a God of their own. Thus by confining the Lord's presence to certain geographical limitations, they deny the infinitude of his existence;

and as a being of divine worship bring him down to a level with the Pagan conception.

The Heathen mariners on board the vessel that Jonah embarked, appear to have possessed the same belief that he did concerning the cause of the tempest with which they were visited—that it was in consequence of an offence given to Deity through the delinquency of some one of the ship's crew. The fact that each one of them cried to his God, shows that they belonged to different nations, and to each of whom God was known by his peculiar national name. When Jonah confessed his truant behavior in disregarding a command of Deity—and departure from his supposed presence, they were afraid: so much did they deprecate the consequence of disobeying a command of God. The fact that they cast lots in their distress, to ascertain which of them was in fault, renders it axiomatical that they entertained the same faith in divine and miraculous interposition of God, in exercising judgment amongst men, that the Israelites did in their family God, *Jehovah*.

When they discovered that the threatened calamity was produced by the wrath of Jonah's God—or Deity by the name to which he was known and worshipped by him, they unanimously called upon God by the name that he ascribed to him, for deliverance from the impending danger; and were in fear of him, according to the superstitious and intuitive religious feeling of an age when all disasters and national

calamities were ascribed to the anger of the Gods. When the storm had passed by, and they felt themselves saved through divine interposition, they offered sacrifices to God under Jonah's title, and made vows accordingly. This shows that they were accustomed to making vows and sacrificing to Deity by their respective local names, the same as the Israelites were to their God by the name of Jehovah. And their social deportment plainly shows that they were not warped by that prejudiced and selfish bigotry that invariably marked the religious character of the intolerant Israelites. The great exertion displayed by those sailors to save Jonah, after he confessed himself guilty, shows that they were more hospitable and kind to other people than the Jews were, as inspired by an idea of God consistent with their illiberal and rude propensities. If the ship had belonged to Jonah's nation, and manned by an Israelite crew, there would have been no effort made to save an absconding Pagan, if detected on board asleep in the midst of such danger as they believed—according to his own confession, he had brought upon them.

Dr. Kitto, in quoting from Dr. Smith, says, "The prophet shrank from a commission which he felt sure would result in the sparing of a hostile city." Even if that view of the subject is correct, the fact would prove that Jonah, as well as his nation in general, were more hostile and ill in their feeling toward other nations, than the Gentiles were toward them; elicited by the humanity displayed by those



seafaring men toward Jonah, after he had caused them such anxiety and trouble.

Dr. Mosheim, in his *Commentaries* on the "Early History of Christianity," when speaking of the Hebrew character in a later period of Jewish history, says, "They were even so wholly destitute of every generous feeling, or sentiment toward strangers, as not only to shun, by every means in their power, whatever might lead to any thing like an intimacy, or reciprocal interchange of good offices among them, but also to imagine themselves at liberty to treat them on all occasions in the most injurious and oppressive manner. It was, therefore, not without reason that they were taxed by the Greeks and Romans with cherishing an hatred to the human race." This Jewish aversion to other people is forcibly depicted in the character of Jonah by Dr. Hengstenberg, when he says, "When the Lord granted mercy to Nineveh he was angry and wished to die, not by any means that he felt himself injured in his honor as a prophet, as was erroneously supposed by Calvin, but because he grudged to the Gentiles the mercy which he considered the prerogative of Israel only, and because he was anxious for the destruction of Nineveh." According to that estimate of his character, what a selfish and unfeeling heart he must have had for a prophet of the Lord!

As idolatry, to which the Ninevites were addicted in the worship of Deity, was not denounced in Jonah's mission,—and which Smith says "certainly was not abandoned in consequence of his

preaching;" it is a problem of difficult solution to tell what moral reformation could have been accomplished by his mission, as he does not seem to have made any call to repentance, or even to have taken a copy of the Law with him. Idolatry being considered the most aggravating sin by the Jehovistic mythologist, their conduct could not be acceptable to the Lord without renouncing it. It was not so easy a matter to get the Israelites to repent when the prophets exhorted them to it. A studious and unsophisticated contemplation of the history of Jonah in his intercourse with people of other nations, leaves the impression that the most plausible object the biblical compilers had in view when arranging the "sacred" canon, by placing this mythical narrative in the Bible, was for the purpose of arraying Judaism and Paganism in correlative juxtaposition, for the purpose of illustrating the reciprocal relationship that existed between the two systems of worship.

Dr. Stanley says, "The inspiration of the Gentile world is acknowledged in the prophecy of Balaam, and its nobleness in the book of Job; but its distinct claims to the mercy and justice of God are first recognized in the book of Jonah. It is the cry of the good heathen that caused the sea to cease her raging." If the cry of the *good* Heathen could calm the sea by supplicating Deity, the Jews or Christians certainly could not produce any stronger supernatural evidence in support of their system of worship, as declared to have only been

given to them by the Lord. Stanley's assertion directly shows that the same worship abstractly prevailed among Jews and Gentiles, though Deity was known to them by different names, and worshipped in diverse ways. But Moses in propagating his selfish views of the theistical idea of Abraham, would not admit his God to be identical with that of the Polytheistic nations, who embellished their worship with the use of images, for the probable purpose of getting those ignorant people whom he controlled from their old system,—notwithstanding his economy was merely a presumptuous deviation from them. For if the mariners did use the name of Jonah's God in their cry, it is manifest that they believed in only *one* God, from the language of the ship-master to Jonah, when he found him asleep,—“Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that *God* will think upon us that we perish not,” (Jon. 1: 6).

Concerning the authenticity of this narrative, Dr. Williams on “Bunsen's Biblical Researches,” says, “It would provoke a smile on serious topics to observe the zeal with which our critic vindicates the personality of Jonah, and the originality of his hymn, (the latter generally being considered doubtful) while he proceeds to explain that the narrative of the book, in which the hymn is imbedded, contains a late legend, founded on misconception. One can imagine the cheers, which the opening of such an essay might evoke in some of our own circles, changing into indignation as the distinguished

foreigner developed his views. After this, he might speak more gently of mythical theories."

In regard to the decree of the Lord in relation to the fall of Nineveh, the writer says, "And God repented of the evil that he said he would do unto them, and did it not," (Jon. 3: 10.) This proves to demonstration that those Jewish writers supposed God liable to change his purposes and adapt them to contingent circumstances. Though the prophet Samuel may have obtained a more correct idea of God's immutability by reading the account of Balaam's discourse to Balak; for on one occasion he declared that the strength of Israel would neither lie nor repent. But unfortunately for his veracity, the declaration is irreconcilably contradictory to the historic and religious programme of his natural instability and irresolution. This assertion is confirmed by his own concurrent testimony when he says, "Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel saying, It *repenteth* me that I have made Saul king:" etc., (1 Sam. 15: 10, 11.) According to his idea, the Lord *could* repent of making a man king, but could *not* repent of a decree for his dethronement!

Dr. Davidson says, "Repentance can only be ascribed to God *metaphorically*, not *literally*. In consequence of the imperfection of language, and the purely spiritual nature of Jehovah, all the descriptions of his character must, in order to be intelligible to us, be conveyed from phrasology borrowed from the operations of our own minds. When

repentance is attributed to God, it implies a change in his mode of dealing with men, such as would indicate on our part a change of purpose," (*Hermeneutics* p. 527). But our theology, as founded on the Bible, represents God as *unchangeable*; and instead of Jehovah being conceived as of a purely *spiritual* nature by his professed worshippers under the old Hebrew economy, they appear to have considered him of a purely *sensual* nature. And in borrowing their ideas of him from their own carnal minds—which he says must be done to be intelligible,—they, in personating him in their own demeanor, represent him subject to all the changes, passions and fluctuations incident to human nature; thus ignoring any univocal idea of God.

But from whatever source the primitive writer may have derived his views of the Divine character, it is evident that when he says, "It repented God that he had made man," he involves the idea that if God had known beforehand how man was going to conduct himself after he was made, he would not have created him. Consequently such a conception strikes fatally at his omniscience. Such an omission in the works of God would have afforded the beasts, birds, etc., the glorious privilege of being their own masters; but would have subjected the Lord to the necessity of naming them, unless he preferred to let them run without names. Whether the four-footed creatures would have proved so refractory under his control, as the authors

represent the human family to have been, we are without means of knowing.

On the subject of God's repentance, Dr. P. Smith says, "It is the manner of the Scriptures, and most copiously in their earliest written parts to speak of the DEITY, his nature, his perfections, his purposes, and his operations, in language borrowed from the bodily and mental constitution of man." If this manner of speaking in relation to Deity was not so common among the later writers of the Bible, it evidently shows that through intercourse with Pagans—particularly Persians and Greeks, the original Hebrew mind underwent a progressive change in regard to their conceptions of God during the lapse of time between the first and last written parts of the Bible. We recently heard a minister assert in the pulpit, that the Law made no provisions for repentance or forgiveness of sins; and in agreement with that fact—to judge from the impressions conveyed by early writers of the Bible, repentance was supposed by them to be exclusively God's prerogative—he not requiring it of man—and apparently unconscious that men could repent, until he discovered that quality in the Ninevites; on which he made no apparent calculation when he issued his positive decree concerning the overthrow of their city.

It was not supposed by the early writers to be essential for Adam to repent of his transgressions; Cain of his fratricidal murder; Noah of his drunkenness and cursing; Lot of his drunken-



ness and incest; Abraham and Jacob of their lies, deceit and fornication; Moses for the murder which compelled him to forsake his native country to save his life, nor the Israelites of their swindling the Egyptians by borrowing with the intention of not returning the goods; under the probable impression that it was not a human quality or requisite. But according to the writer, when God discovered that those Pagan Ninevites were susceptible of repentance through sorrow for sin, he announced to Jeremiah, (15: 6), that he was weary with repenting himself, and consequently seems to have turned that changeable and contrite quality over exclusively to the people, and made it imperative with them. But owing to their incorrigibility in not complying with it to his satisfaction, he next declared, (Jer. 13: 13), that he would fill all the inhabitants of the land with drunkenness. Then, to cap the climax of his eccentricity, he made pious Jeremiah drunk with wormwood, broke his teeth with gravel stones, and covered him with ashes! (Lam. 3: 15, 16).

## CHAPTER X.

The Lord and Satan placed on a social equality in the book of Job—Origin of the name Jehovah—Colenso—Coleridge—Plumer—Curse of the Serpent in the person of Satan—Views entertained concerning Job and the book that bears his name, by Warburton, Gurney, Eben-Ezra, W. Smith, Calmet, Lighfoot and others.

That admirable ancient allegory, the book of Job—where the historic style of the Bible changes into elegy, places the Hebrew idea of God in remarkable peculiar circumstances in regard to his social equality with the Devil. This narrative—which Dr. Plumer considers the best epic poem in the world, may, with much plausibility be taken for a Pagan production. It is not connected with the history of God's "chosen people;" and the reason why it has been given a place among the sacred writings of the Jews, is doubtless because the reputed author worshipped God by the same name by which he was known to the Israelites; and by which name, *Jehovah*, he seems to have known and worshipped him when Abraham was in ignorance of it, and hundreds of years before Moses claimed to have first received the reverential term.

Bishop Colenso, says, "In fact, from what we have already seen of the unhistorical character, generally, of the account of the Exodus, we have no longer any reason for supposing it to be necessary

to believe that the name Jehovah really originated in the way described in Ex. 6. Yet it must have originated in *some* way,—at some time or other,—in the real history of the Hebrew people, just as the Zulu name for the Creator, Unkulunkulu, the ‘Great-Great-One,’ must have been first used by some one, in some part of their past history. Is it not *possible* then, that the name Jehovah may have been first employed by Samuel, in order to mark more distinctly the difference between the Elohim of the Hebrews, and the Elohim of the nations around them, and make it more difficult for them to fall away to the practice of idolatry?” (vol. 2. chap. 11).

The author of the book of Job, says, “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them,” (Job 1: 6). From this we infer that the place where God and his sons assembled together for mutual association was also accessible to the Devil. Nor does that reprobate seem to have been considered out of place there by the Lord. For on making his appearance among the heavenly host, the Lord immediately commenced an apparently amicable conversation with him on a subject of personal interest. And in reply to the inquiry whence he came, said, “From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.” The Lord next inquired whether he had seen or considered any thing in his travels equal to his servant Job, in integrity and uprightness, in the same manner that

one man would converse with another, or boast respecting the merit of a dutiful and choice servant. It is astonishing though, after God had cursed the Serpent—who is synonymous of Satan, and doomed him to crawl on his stomach all the days of his life, that he should now be found in possession of walking appendages, with which he had not only been traveling up and down in the earth, but had actually walked into heaven! And what is equally surprising, the Lord made no protest against his company amongst his sons, nor exhibited the least repugnance to his society.

For the purpose then of giving some idea how Satan would be likely to appear in “high circles,” after leaving his sooty dominions, we will perhaps be excusable for making a draw on the poetic effusions of Coleridge in the use of such language as,—

“And how then was the Devil drest ?

Oh! he was in his sunday best ;

With jacket red and breeches blue,

And a hole where the tail came through.”

Dr. Plumer says, “When the rebellion broke out in heaven, as in a moment he emptied the shining seats above, rather than to let one sinning angel remain in his estate, a standing reproach to God, a monument of God’s tolerance of sin.” But here—according to *Scripture*, we find the leading apostate in that mythological rebellion prevailing heaven with divine approbation and apparent favor of God, and lying to his face with perfect impunity. That infernal dignitary—who is said to have been

consigned to an eternal residence in Tartarus in a pre-Adamite age, seems to have again visited heaven in the time of Christ; for he speaks of seeing him fall as lightning from there. Judging from his rapid descent, he must have left there rather unceremoniously, in probable consequence of failing to meet with such a cordial reception as he did in the time of Job. But where he struck the earth in his fall, or whether he became so severely crippled in consequence of it as Vulcan did when he was ejected from that place by Jupiter, we are not informed.

In the conversation between the Lord and Satan, the latter told the Lord that Job's devotedness to him was the result of the favors he was conferring upon him, and that if he would turn his hand against him, he would curse him to his face. An omniscient being would have known that his language in regard to Job was a lie when it was uttered, without subjecting a good man to such a calamitous trial for the purpose of ascertaining its truth; as the writer makes it appear. If the Lord did not know the depth of Job's heart, and the soundness of his religious devotion, there would have been some chance for Satanic success: and if he had succeeded in verifying his word, it would have been equivalent to a victory on his part over the Lord. And if his wisdom and sagacity were sufficient to triumph over the Lord in one contest—as the author may have supposed when he placed

them in competition, his shrewdness in metaphysical subtilities would without doubt have secured him a victory in another moral debate. And by that time his prescient wisdom and controversial ability over the Lord, would have made him sufficiently influential in heaven to usurp the supreme authority there; when an interchange of places between the two rivals would have been the probable consequence. And the lies told by Satan in his polemical discourse with Jehovah, we are required to venerate as the *sacred* and *infallible* word of God, inasmuch as they constitute a portion of the Bible.

This metaphorical history exhibits the Lord as willingly subjecting the most devoted and upright man on earth, to the most grievous and distressing calamities that could be conceived by the Devil, merely to gratify the idle curiosity of his most implacable enemy. Though Job's children all fell victims to the malignity of the Devil, yet apparently, on account of his wife's ill feeling toward the supposed author of such an unjustifiable family affliction, Satan thought her good enough to be let alone. Coleridge takes notice of this when he says,—

“Sly Beelzebub took all occasions  
To try Job's constancy and patience,  
He took his honor, took his health,  
Took his children, took his wealth,  
His servants, oxen, horses, cows—  
But Satan did not take his spouse.”

But whether she was mother of his second set of children, the history does not state.



Though the Lord gracefully yielded to the experiments of his inveterate foe, and evinced no displeasure at the untruths spoken to him by Satan—impeaching Job's invincible integrity, yet, according to a more primitive allegorical writer, he took umbrage, and became sensibly aggravated and highly indignant at him in the beginning, for disclosing to Eve, what was admitted by himself to be the *truth*—that by eating the tree of knowledge they had become as the Gods, knowing good and evil, (Gen. 3: 5. 22). After Satan had revealed this “theological” truth to Eve, the Lord, in retaliating on him for his audacity in enlightening the first couple, and promoting the cause of knowledge, is shown by the writer to have inaugurated the base and vindictive practice of cursing. And as Moses in his valedictory injunctions to the Israelites, (Deut. 27: 13), named one half of the tribes who were to stand on mount Ebal to *curse*, in opposition to those who stood on mount Gerizim to *bless*, it therefore became quite a consequential internal rite in the religious ceremonies of his assumed people; and sufficiently practised by them to show their moral depravity, and general deficiency in the natural feelings of humanity.

This mythic curse of the Lord upon the Serpent does not appear literally to have been productive of consequences any more unhappy than cursing in general ever was. We are not informed that he was deprived of any pedestrian facilities thereby, and if he had previously hopped on his tail, or crawled

on his back, the curse of being doomed to go on his belly, manifestly effected a blessing, by causing an important increase in his powers of locomotion. And as he was commanded to eat dust all the days of his life, rainy ones necessarily included, that mandate would make it incumbent on the Lord to build him a house for the purpose of having some dust stored away under roof, for his use in wet weather; otherwise he would have no possible means of obeying him on rainy days. But as K. Graves in his *Biography* of him, says, the original serpent no doubt soon died of starvation, as there is no nutriment in the kind of food he was sentenced to eat. And his descendants in modern times have emancipated themselves from the primitive injunction, by partaking of such food as is best adapted to their taste and convenience—one of whom we once observed enjoying his repast on a toad, toward which he appeared to possess no conscientious scruples against taking in whole!

When Satan, in connection with the history of Job, received his commission of the purpose of afflicting him, he went forth from the presence of the Lord: whereby the writer, whether Jew or Gentile, limits the Divine presence to some special location, discarding the doctrine of an omnipresent Deity, or the ubiquity of that principle which mankind in a more advanced and spiritually developed period of the world, term *God*.

The fact that Job and his friends were worshippers of Jehovah, without any connection with God's

reputed chosen people, and the unauthentic narrative declared by both Jews and Christian, to be divinely inspired, places Judaism and Paganism on an equality. And by giving it a place among the "sacred" writings, the biblical compiler places the two systems of worship on a parallel, conclusively showing that they were of a common origin.

In regard to the date, originality, and authenticity of the book of Job, an addition to the Septuagint version of it, together with Philo and others, reckon Job the same as Jobab, an ancient king of Edom. This opinion is corroborated to some extent by the language of the presumed author, when he says, I sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army," (Job. 29: 35). The Userian or Bible chronology places the trial of this individual about the year 1520 B. C., only 29 or 30 years anterior to the days of the reputed writings of Moses. But if Job was a real character, as Bishop Horne and other theologians maintain, because referred to by this prophet Ezekiel, and author of the book that goes under his name, the fact of his officiating as high priest in his family, according to the patriarchal custom, which was not observed in the time the book dates from, and the evidence of his being advanced in life at the time of his affliction, his family being all settled in life; and his survival of 140 years, would, according to his longevity, place him cotemporary with Peleg. This would fix the period of his history centuries anterior to the time in which it is arranged in our Bible chronology.

The general air of antiquity that prevades the manners recorded in the poem, is strong evidence of its remote date, its customs corresponding to a much earlier period than our accepted chronology admits; and according to Michaelis, agrees with the Abrahamic age. Bishop Warburton, with his usual sagacity, argues at considerable length with more than ordinary ingenuity (and about as much conceit as he charges Mosheim with on another subject), to show that the book was not written until the Jews' return from the Babylonist captivity; and that it represents the circumstances of those people at that time. Though he supposes it to be a dramatic allegory, he will not admit that fact to render it fictitious; and twits Dr. Middleton, for saying that Ezekiel and St. James refer to the *Book of Job*, as if it were a true history, when in fact, he says they do not refer to the *Book of Job* at all! Though he confesses that the idea of a future life is conveyed in the book, he nevertheless holds that the famous words, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," etc., when taken in their literal sense, signify only a temporal deliverance: and says if Job spoke of a resurrection, he contradicted the general tenor of his argument throughout the whole disputation.

Manasseh Ben Israel, in a Chapter against the Sadducees, asserts that Job taught the very contrary to a future life, but considers that no argument against the reality of such a state. Dr. Gurney, in his "Biblical Notes," says, "When Job exclaimed, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*, he plainly did not

allude to any of his fellow creatures, but to a divine Protector, from whom he expected his deliverance; and that the name *Redeemer*, was appointed to the *Son of God*," etc. As Job was anticipating deliverance only from the sore affliction that he was then undergoing, and the idea of future existence, or redemption beyond the grave discarded by the general tenor of the book, it precludes the supposition that his fancied *Redeemer* had reference to any other than the Lord whom he worshipped. And the latter day to which he alludes, signified the closing part of his earthly existence; when, according to his anticipation he was literally *redeemed* from his wretched condition by being made prosperous and happy.

The doctrine of a *latter day* in view of a general judgment and consumation, was an apostolic conception, and foreign to the mundane views of the Old Testament writers. A latter day in connection with the dissolution of the earth was contradictory to the inspired teaching of the Hebrew authors. The Psalmist, (104: 5), says, "The Lord hath laid the foundations of the earth that it should not be removed forever." Solomon says, "The earth abideth forever," (Ecc. 1: 4).

Aben Ezra—a learned Jewish astronomer, philologist, and commentator of the 12th century, endeavors to show from the use of the Greek terms—Pleiades, Orion, and Arcturus as employed in the work, and the incongruity of the genius displayed in the drama to the Hebrew character, that it is a

translation from some Gentile production long since lost. This opinion is sustained by the testimony of Theodore of Mopsuestia—a learned Christian philosopher and divine of the 5th century, in his writings against Apollonius. Dr. W. Smith, when commenting on the difficulty concerning this book, in his *Bible Dictionary*, says. “The enormous mass of notes which the reader must wade through, before he can feel himself competent to decide upon the most probable interpretation of a single chapter, proves that this book stands apart from all other productions of the Hebrews, belongs to a different epoch, and in accordance with the surest canons of criticism, to an earlier age.” In his “Old Testament History” he says, “The opinions of Job and his friends are peculiarly interesting as exhibiting the aspect of the patriarchal religion outside the family of Abraham, and as yet unassisted by the legislation of Moses.” Thus Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, and Elihu being outside the family of Abraham, and consequently Pagans, it shows that the worship of the Lord was not confined to the descendants of that chosen man of Jehovah, whom Moses declares never knew him by that name, (Ex. 6 : 3).

Dr. Lightfoot, informs us that Job was a son of Nahor—and nephew of Abraham. As he does not give his authority for the statement, the inference is that he makes it on his own responsibility. He also quotes from different parts of the book to show that Elihu wrote it. Calmet, says, “The author,



who ever he was, has practised all the beauties of his art, in the character of the four persons whom he brings upon the stage." And maintains that he must have been a Jew, because of his acquaintance with the Scriptures. But the Scriptures as we have them were not written for centuries after the time in which Job is supposed to have lived. And as the name is of Eastern origin, it is conclusive that he could not have been a Jew.

The book is evidently the composition of some ancient individual—portraying a participation in the drama by the hero of the narrative and his friends; but whether the author was Elihu, Job, Moses, Solomon, Isaiah, or Ezra, all of whom have been contended for by different commentators, is of little consequence. The imitation which the style of writing bears to the Orphic hymns, is decisive that the author was some Pagan sage whose name was never recorded in the Bible; and no better evidence than this poem is required to show that ancient Judaism possessed no claims to a knowledge of true worship over that of Paganism.

## CHAPTER XI.

Psalmist—Satan, and his supposed influence, theologically the work of God—Origin of Evil—Moral depravity of the human family, and God's curse the result of Adam's transgression ; with Quotations from and Criticisms on—Zoroaster—Woods--Littleton—Locke—Leibnitz—Tyng—Bengel—Harris--Johnson—Loveland—Hitchcock—Edwards—Luther—Hopkins—Menu—Newton—Armstrong—Hodge—Ware—Burnap and Alexander—Paul's doctrine of original sin inexplicable on the common sense principle of moral government.

The Psalmist, when describing God's abhorrence of sin, says, that he hates all workers of iniquity. This charge must have necessarily included himself,—for if waging aggressive wars, and plundering other nations of their gold and silver for the purpose of furnishing and decorating a house that he intended to build and dedicate to his war God—as David did, is not iniquity, it would puzzle a metaphysical philosopher to tell what is. As the Lord made all the workers of iniquity, he must under such a charge, hate his own works. For if he created human beings with a nature to work iniquity, their iniquitous conduct is merely the issue of his own labors. Yet it manifestly sounds more absurd than *theo*-logical to suppose that an omniscient Being who knew all his works from the beginning, (Acts 15: 18), would hate the result of his own labor, which was accomplished through the infinitude of his wisdom. For theologians to argue that the sin-

fulness of man's condition is the result of Satanic influence operating in opposition to God, is equivalent to an admission on their part that Satan exercises a power over man with which God cannot successfully contend. For we cannot believe that a *divine* Being would create man perfect, and then be utterly regardless of keeping him so if it laid in his power. And it would be still more irrational for him to create an agent of sufficient ability, for the purpose of defeating the good design of his moral works. To contend that Satan causes men to be wicked when God wishes them to do good, either strikes fatally at God's omnipotence, or furnishes us with two omnipotent beings acting antagonistically. And admitting God to be the *Almighty* creator of all,—the existence of Satan as a personal character, would represent him as performing an act of efficient causation in order to produce the transgression of his own laws. Agreeable with such chimerical doctrine, it would be difficult to conceive what more would be required to constitute God the author of what is theologically portrayed to be repugnant to his feeling and odious to his nature.

The theology of Zoroaster, the Magian reformer, concerning the moral condition of the world, is more logical and consistent with the dignity and supremacy of God, than the Christian theory of belief. He maintained that there was one Supreme being, independent and self-existing from eternity; and that under him were two angels, one the angel of light, who was the author of all good;

and the other the angel of darkness, who was the author of all evil; and that they were in a perpetual struggle with each other. While this metaphysical view exalts the Deity above any conflict with the Devil or connection with evil, our Christian system of theology degrades him to an extent that places him in a continual struggle with the Devil; and supposes him to be in the pitiful position of seeing his adversary the most successful. According to Christian theology, God either could have prevented the introduction of sin into the world by the fall of man through the artifice of the Serpent, and would not, or he would have prevented it and could not; which attitude in relation to the moral condition of the world, renders him malevolent or impotent: either of which qualities would furnish us with a lame Deity.

Concerning the origin and authorship of *evil*, with which the works of God abound, Dr. Woods says, "Why moral evil should ever be suffered to exist in beings who are entirely dependent on God, and under his control, and how its existence can be accounted for consistently with the infinite perfection of God, is a question which human wisdom, untaught from above, can give no satisfactory answer." The answer is—If God is omnipotent, everything is in accordance with his will; and if the answers is not *satisfactory*, it is only because of not being able to comprehend or appreciate the operations of God. And if human beings are under the control of a Being of infinite power and perfec-

tion, as he supposes, the present moral condition of the world must be right.

Lord Littleton says, "Such is the origin of evil under the government of an all-good and all-powerful God, a question so hard, that the inability to solve it in a satisfactory manner to their apprehensions has driven some of the greatest philosophers into the monstrous and senseless opinions of manicheism and atheism." But how can we believe that an *all-good and all-powerful* God, would so institute his divine laws as to drive his most intellectual and rational creatures into error, through the intuitions of that mental capacity with which he has endowed them, in accordance with their own free will? Though the metaphysical philosopher Locke, acknowledged the free will of man and prescience of God,—are we to suppose that he was driven into error by confessing his inability to reconcile them when he said, "They who take away reason to let in revelation put out the light of both?"

Prof. Leibnitz, who is considered the most philosophical defender of Christianity, holds that God is no more the author of evil than he is author of his own understanding. If God is not author of his own understanding, we are left to wonder from what source it comes. In defence of his theory, in his *essay* on the "Goodness of God, the Liberty of Man, and Origin of Evil," he says, "Evil comes rather from he abstract forms themselves, that is to say from ideas which God has not produced by an act of his will, any more than numbers and figures, and any more, in

short, than all possible essences, which should be reckoned eternal and necessary, for they are found in the ideal regions of the possibles—that is to say in the Divine understanding. God then is not the author of the essences so long as they are but possibilities—but there is nothing actual which he has not decreed and given existence to; and he has permitted evil, because it is enveloped in the best plan which is found in the regions of the possibles.”

From this we infer that if God has not decreed or given existence to evil, sin cannot be *actual*; and admitting that it is enveloped in the best plan that the Divine Mind could find in the *regions of the possibles*, the doctrine would only amount to the sentiment deprecated by the apostle Paul, of tolerating evil that good might come. If evil comes from ideas which God has not produced by an act of his will any more than all possible essences which should be reckoned *eternal and necessary*, it proves to demonstration that sin is indispensable in the divine economy of human progression. Evil, therefore, being evidently a necessity of Nature, may be considered without origin. Which conception is not averse to the metaphysics of Pythagoras, who supposed evil to be uncreated and infinite, but good, created and finite.

Dr. Tyng says, “When God first made man, he committed the life of the whole family to Adam as their head and representative, that they might stand or fall by him; but notwithstanding Adam was made perfect, and had but one single restraint imposed upon



him as a test to his fidelity, he fell," etc. But there is no *original* evidence that the fate of the race was ever committed to Adam; for that doctrine was not contrived till four thousand years after the reputed time of his fall. And the scriptural account that he fell by not resisting temptation, decisively proves that he could not have been immaculate and perfect, or he never would have succumbed to the influence of what is considered imperfection. We can easily imagine that, agreeable with scripture, Adam came into the world *very good*, in consequence of his ignorance, and as readily conceive that an infant is born equally perfect. But when the intellectual capacity of the child begins to develop itself in progression to maturity, it naturally becomes a victim to what is metaphysically termed evil. Thus it was with Adam; and according to the allegory, he may be very good until temptation was placed before him, when, by immediately yielding to it, he gives irrefragible testimony that he was no more perfect than a new-born infant; and instead of being virtually impaired by the act, he only took an onward step in the divine economy of human progression.

At the time when this restraint is said to have been laid on Adam, he was a passive being in every sense of the word, and not a responsible creature, on account of his ignorance in not knowing good from evil: hence the futility of giving him such a command under those circumstances. According to our theology, a race of accountable beings are supposed to have been ruined by the act of an irre-

sponsible one, by which alleged transgression and disobedience he alone became a moral agent. We are theologically taught to believe that the human race were cursed for the act of a man, which placed the perpetrator of the act on an *actual* equality with God! (Gen. 3: 22). As man came in possession of moral intelligence by that act, it demonstrates that no such command could have consistently been given at the time, inasmuch as a knowledge of good and evil is an absolute necessity in the existence and destiny of man. And as hereditary punishment was never permitted among civilized people, the theological charge that God holds the posterity of Adam responsible for his transgression, renders the Divine Principle more infamous and less civilized than human creatures.

As the alleged ruin of the race is said to have been the result of *Adam's* transgression, when *Eve* first disobeyed the command, Bengel pertinently inquires, "Why nothing is said of the woman?" In answering the question he says, "Adam was not only the Head of the race, but also of Eve." But he should have remembered that in the first place Eve was placed on an equality with Adam in regard to dominion and power; (Gen. 1: 28), and that it was only after, and for the apparent cause of having proved himself so weak minded and irresolute as to be controlled by a woman, that the cosmogonist gives him authority to rule over her! That the apparently distracted condition of the

moral world is in accordance with the original design of Divinity, (if there is any Divinity or design about it), is conclusive from the fact that the act of a woman could not have produced a physiological change in the moral constitution of man; and that we are theologically taught that man is prone to evil. According to the primitive account, it was through an act of Eve that man learned the difference between good and evil; and if man had failed to arrive at that degree of knowledge, in what moral condition are we to suppose the world would have been in at this day with such intense ignorance prevailing among the race as not to be sensible of the difference between right and wrong, with their nature prone to evil? To the Serpent and Eve, then, according to our theology, belongs the credit for elevating the human race to that degree of knowledge which enables them to combat with a nature that God created them prone to.

Dr. Harris in his "Man Primeval," (p. 412) says, "It would be inconsistent with every just view of the character of God, to suppose that he was disappointed by the entrance of sin into the world, or was taken by surprise by it; events immediately subsequent evinced that the plans which Providence had arranged clearly presupposed that man's earthly existence would be one of sinfulness." That *pre-supposition* is successfully refuted by the scriptural testimony that when God saw the sinfulness of man's condition, he repented of having made him. In accordance with the Bible and theologians in general,

he maintains that God is irreconcilable with sin, though he voluntarily created man, not only with ability to sin, but with the fore-knowledge that he would indulge in it, with the principles of that nature which he possessed while in his pristine condition and image of his maker. In reply to the inquiry whether God could have prevented sin, he says, "The majority of answers which have been given to this question amount simply to this, that *constituted as man is*, he could not be restrained from sinning, without having a restraint placed upon his moral agency." But as Dr. Johnson, says, "We are but little enlightened by learning that any being in the state that man is must suffer what man suffers, when the only question that requires to be resolved is, why any being *is* in this state." For it is manifest from the dictates of that sense and reason with which God has endowed intellectual creatures, that if he had not desired man to sin, he would not under the circumstances of his nature have invested him with a free agency to indulge in it.

J. S. Loveland, in the "Present Age," eloquently dilates on this ontological perplexity by saying, "There is no such thing in God's universe as a principle of positive evil. Evil is the travail pain of the soul's birth from the material surroundings to immortality, life and joy. It is the friction of the spiritual life, in its evolutions from the material. Evil is therefore, inevitable, but temporary. In one position, it is good, and, in the absolute sense, it is right that evil is. It is only when you attempt

to force the animal rule of selfishness into the domain of the spiritual, that good becomes evil, right is transformed into wrong. When the means of culture and progress are ignored, or supplanted by selfish, animal passions, then the spiritual nature protests, and affirms the wrong." Perhaps such lofty metaphysical conceptions as those may have led the *geological* theologian Dr. Hichtcock, to say, "It was benevolent on the part of God to allow evil to abound in a world which was to be the residence of a sinful creature; for the discipline of such a state was the only chance for his being rescued from the power of sin," etc. He further says, "God foresaw that man would transgress, and therefore he made a world adapted to a fallen and sinful being, rather than to one pure and holy." Such sentiment plainly implicates God in the ratification of evil; which, if sin be morally wrong—as he maintains, would only be excusable in an infinitely holy Being on the ground of impotency.

It is the manifest object of the Christian theology to place man lower in the depth of vice and depravity through a forfeited right to divine favor, or alienation from grace produced by Adam's sin, than was conceived by the Divine Being when he created him. This doctrinal position is clearly shown by the language of that famous reformer Martin Luther, when he says, "Men are by nature children of wrath, and subject to the curse; whatsoever they do must needs be accursed; for it is before proved at large that he which is evil, can do

nothing that is good; likewise, that we can do nothing that God will approve, unless we ourselves be approved of him before." The devoted Dr. Hopkins, also says, "Man being wholly depraved by nature, wholly adverse to God and goodness, could do nothing but sin, before the mighty power of God had implanted a new principle of holiness within his heart." Are we to suppose that Adam could do nothing right after having disregarded an insignificant command? Why was it not essential for him to have a new heart, and another principle implanted in his nature, after having been made as perfect in the first place as God knew how to make him? Because such doctrine was not conceived till a much later period in the history of man. As theologians are not willing to admit that Adam is suffering in everlasting torment for want of regeneration on earth, it appears that instead of his transgression being attended with such unhappy results to himself, it was only the means of auspiciously removing him from the turmoils of a terrestrial existence, and transplanting him in a state of celestial felicity in companionship with God in heaven.

According to Hopkins, the very prayers and efforts of a sinner for regeneration and deliverance from the supposed future consequences of sin, would be so many crimes deserving of divine wrath! and his very struggles for pardon and salvation—wanting, as they inevitably would, a holy motive which could not originate in the deep pollution of an unregenerated and totally depraved nature, only in-



crease his guilt and condemnation! What a desperate state of depravity and impotence on the part of man to please God is thus taught to be the result of Divine wisdom! Theologians in their determination to exhibit the wickedness of man in its most glowing colors, overlook all the natural good qualities the race possess, by perpetually harping on their bad ones. When, if the human family were really so vicious as they are inclined to portray them, they would molest and devour each other to such a degree, that the whole posterity of Adam would soon be as completely annihilated as the Kilkenny cats after their destructive combat.

A passage in the *Vedas*, of Menu, as inspired by Deity under the Hindoo title of Brahmah, reads thus: "Souls endued with goodness attain always to the state of deities; those filled with ambitious passions, the condition of men; and those immersed in darkness, the nature of beasts." How much more rational such religious sentiment sounds than the inspired doctrine of our Bible, that we are *all* born in such a state of *total* moral depravity that we can attain to nothing good until we undergo a second birth! Zoroaster, as inspired by Ormuzd, in the *Zend Avesta*, says, "Contend constantly against evil, morally and physically, internally and externally. Strive in every way to diminish the power of Ahriman and destroy his works. If a man do this he may fearlessly meet death;" etc. Which, a man born in such utter depravity as our system of faith teaches we all are, he could not do,

until the Lord graciously saw fit to give him another nature by putting him through the process of a new birth. As he was *first* made in the image of God, and proved a moral failure, we are led to wonder in whose *image* he is created the *second* time, when regenerated.

Prof. Edwards on "Original Sin," when criticising Dr. Turnbull's estimate of the prevalence of sin in the world, by letting the imagination run out on all the robberies, piracies, murders, perjuries, frauds, massacres and assassinations that they have ever heard or read of in history, says, "But ought they not to consider that the number of honest citizens and farmers far surpasses that of all sorts of criminals in any state, and that the innocent and kind actions of even criminals themselves, surpasses their crimes in number; and that it is the rarity of crimes in comparison with the innocent and good actions, which engages our attention to them, and makes them to be recorded in history, while honest, generous, domestic actions, are overlooked, only because they are so common?" Yet in a *Miscellaneous Discourse*, from Rom. 5: 10, he portrays the human character in the following language: "There is in every natural man a seed of malice against God. . . . When wicked men come to be cast into hell, then their malice against God will appear. Then their hearts will be as full of malice as hell is full of fire. . . . A natural man has a heart like the heart of a devil; only corruption is more under restraint

in man than devils." But how can man be so malicious and *develish* when he is the author of so many innocent and kind actions as he admits him to be, even in his naturally depraved state? Or who planted this *seed of malice* in him, which does not become fully developed until he gets into hell? If the Devil did it, he could not have accomplished it without divine and *almighty* permission: and if God would condemn a man to everlasting hell-fire torment, for being possessed with a principle that he invested the Devil with power to instil into him while in a state of innocence and ignorance, he would without equivocation appear the most unfeeling and malicious of the two. This *seed of malice* that he speaks of, evidently had its origin in the theological misconception of Divine attributes; for no God of love or mercy could conceive such malignity against his created beings, as that which the Christian theology represents God to have displayed toward the race, in holding them subject to such fearful ruin for a cause that they could not prevent.

The estimable John Newton, towards the close of his life said, "I used to be confident of many things, but now, I know with certainty, only these two: that John Newton is a great sinner, and Jesus Christ a great Saviour." But in what way did he distinguish himself to be such a *great* sinner? It is only by cherishing this doctrine of intense human depravity that its adherents become so firmly established in such an unfounded belief. And it is ob-

viously depreciating the merit of God, to represent his noblest works to be so grossly imperfect. Though we do not dispute that all are bad enough by nature, and some ten times worse than others,—yet if the hearts of some sinners are “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,” according to *scripture*, that does not prove all to be such vile characters. And to admonish a mischievous child or a vicious person by continually telling them that they are very bad, and deserve nothing but punishment, without giving them credit for what worthy and kind actions they may have performed, gives them no encouragement to guard against their natural propensities, which unfortunately may be strongly inclined to vice. Such a system of reformation can accomplish no more towards producing a moral change in them, than Christ effected in the Scribes and Pharisees by preaching *wo* unto them. Thus exemplary and well meaning men, by always proclaiming the great wickedness of mankind, and the terrible wrath of God, only discourage the naturally good, and prevent the corrupt from attempting to improve. Good and evil disposed persons have existed among all people in all countries, and in all ages—Bibles or no Bibles, and so it is likely to continue till a better system of reformation is adopted than the present Christian scheme of theology.

Dr. Armstrong says, “On the other hand, we have seen that all good has not disappeared, either

from the heart, or life of man. There are unmistakable traces of a better nature yet discoverable. The fundamental distinction between truth and error, right and wrong, has not been obliterated. Justice, truth, honesty, purity, are yet of good report among men. And the idea is suggested that man, though a ruined, is not a heaven forsaken creature." But how can he be a *ruined* creature when he bears testimony to not being heaven forsaken, by possessing those natural virtuous qualities?

If, as Dr. Hodge argues, the sin of Adam ruined us, and was the ground on which the divine favor was withdrawn from the whole race, and as Woods maintains, that God inflicts punishment on all men for the sin of one man, in agreement with Paul's doctrine—"That for the offence of one man judgment came upon all unto condemnation,"—we inquire is it not unjust and derogatory to the goodness of God, to charge him with falsely condemning the innocent, and punishing them for what they never did? What reason or justice is there in the supposition that an unborn creature should forfeit his right to a sound moral constitution and ability to do good, by an act which he never performed? And which is alleged to have occurred thousands of years before he was born. Yet such is the ordained and established conception of the Divine character, as taught by the christian theology and endorsed by believers.

When not infatuated with such utopian sophistry

as that which the originators of the christian theology have inculcated in derogation to the name of Divinity, the unbiased mind readily conceives, as Dr. Ware says, that man is by nature, as he comes from his Creator, innocent and pure: he is by nature no more inclined to vice than to virtue, and equally capable, in the ordinary use of his faculties, and the common assistance afforded him, of either. Or, as Dr. Burnap says, "Every human soul comes from the hand of God pure, without any decided character, but capable of virtue and holiness, though exposed to temptation and sin." The doctrine of Pelagius, that we derive no corruption from the fall of Adam, but are born as pure and unspotted as he came from the hand of his Maker, is most consistent with reason and the natural conceptions of Divinity in the present advanced state of the human mind.

Dr. Alexander says, "All intuitively discern that for a ruler to punish the innocent is morally wrong:" and to overcome theological difficulties so inimical to the goodness of God as the Pauline system of faith unavoidably entangles its adherents in, Dr. Woods says, "We have no resting-place until we seize the sublime truth that God's ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts, and that all his acts and appointments are right." But evidence is wanting to prove that *ways* so much at variance with justice, are *God's* ways, and that *acts* so contrary to goodness, are his *divine* appointments. The fact that an enthusiastic reli-



gious propagandist excogitated such a chimerical and untenable doctrine—in conflict with all natural conceptions of reason, justice, and humanity, in a mystical period of the world, when reformers were predisposed to teach abstruse and inexplicable doctrine for the apparent purpose of keeping the populace in ignorance, will not answer the purpose now that it may have done then. But we feel inclined to give Dr. Hodge credit for his theological discernment and honest confession in regard to the controversy respecting the ordinances of God in relation to man, when he says, “They cannot be explained on the common-sense principles of moral government; the system which Paul taught was not a system of common sense,” (Prin. Review).

## CHAPTER XII.

Same subject continued—E. Beecher—Calvin—Edwards and Channing on Calvinism. Park—Spurgeon—Conversation with an orthodox lady—Felsenthal—H. W. Beecher—Haldane—Augustine—Baxter—Bascom—Watts—J. Taylor—Wesley—Barnes—Kempis—Criticism of an English Churchman—Davis—Mysteries—Butler—A. Clarke—Stillingfleet—Fox—Confession of faith—Whelpley—Inference that the Bible furnishes no reliable evidence that the moral affairs of the world are controlled by a personal God of almighty power and infinite goodness—Cudworth—Schmucker—Doddridge—Paley—Buchanan—Fitzgerald—Origen—Zeno—Paul and the Greek poets—Arius—Jesus—Henry—Prayer—Pythagoras—R. Taylor—Prince—Howitt—Ennemozer—Incomprehensibility of God—Demosthenes—Parker—Frothingham—H. W. Beecher's idea of God—Tappan—Renan—Gould—Hardinge—Tuttle.

Dr. E. Beecher, who in his "Conflict of Ages," studiously presents these antagonistic views of our theological writers in polemical juxtaposition, truly says, "That any created being should deserve punishment for a nature existing in him anterior to any knowledge, will, or act of his own, will ever and universally be regarded as at war with the divinely inspired principles of honor and right by all who are left to their own natural and spontaneous convictions." It is as transparent as a sunbeam in a cloudless sky, that the natural and spontaneous convictions of a man are the impressions which the Author of his existence implanted within

him; and consequently God is responsible for them. Yet he confesses that God does in all parts of the Bible throw the entire blame of men's ruin on themselves, declaring it to be contrary to his wishes and pleasure. Thus according to the Bible, God charges men with causing their own ruin by doing what he was the cause of, in creating them with a nature to do it. But such doctrine connected with the idea that the affairs in relation to man's happiness work contrary to the wish and pleasure of an *omnipotent* author, is not only rank sophism, but a libel on the infinitude of Deity; and might with propriety be considered monstrous. If God implanted such incongruous notions in relation to himself in the minds of virtuous men in past ages, we can rejoice in the fact that he has begun to infuse nobler sentiment into those devoted to the cause of humanity in the present day.

Doctrine equally detracting, and slanderous to Divinity, was taught by that noted reformer, John Calvin; who says, "We are all Adam's children; and therefore accursed; we are in the bottomless pit of death; there is nothing but death and condemnation in us;" etc. Sentiment equally repugnant to humanity was also uttered by him in regard to infants when he says, "They bring their condemnation with them from their mother's womb, being liable to punishment, not for the sin of another, but for their own. For although they have not as yet produced the fruits of their iniquity, yet they have the seed enclosed within themselves; nay, their

whole nature is, as it were a seed of sin ; therefore it cannot but be odious and abominable to God." For the issue of God's works, which were accomplished through infinite wisdom, to be *odious and abominable* to him, is a doctrine too monstrous to be accepted by any one guided by the light of reason and love of humanity.

Prof. Edwards, in his *Essay* on "Original Sin"—which is considered the most profound exposition of Calvinism ever written—says, "To think of poor little *infants* bearing such torments for *Adam's* sins, as they sometimes do in this world, and these torments ending in death and annihilation, may sit easier on the imagination, than to conceive of their suffering eternal misery for it. But it does not at all relieve one's reason." But *one's reason* that could conceive either annihilation or eternal punishment for *poor little infants* in consequence of an act committed by their progenitor, can scarcely be supposed worthy of relief or sympathy from humanity.

In opposition to the Calvinistic doctrine that from a ruined race, God, out of his mere good pleasure, has elected a certain number to be saved by Christ, not induced to this choice by any foresight of their faith or good works,—Dr. Channing says, "We are persuaded, is giving place to better views. It has passed its meridian, and is sinking to rise no more. It has to contend with foes more formidable than theologians, with foes, from which it cannot shield itself in mystery and metaphysical

subtilities; we mean with the progress of the human mind, and with the progress of the spirit of the Gospel. Society is going forward in intelligence and charity, and of course is leaving the theology of the sixteenth century behind it. . . . Christianity is gaining more by the removing of degrading errors, than it would by armies of missionaries who should carry with them a corrupted form of religion." He further says, "We can endure any errors but those which subvert or unsettle the conviction of God's paternal goodness: urge not upon us a system which makes existence a curse, and wraps the universe in gloom."

Prof. Park, of Andover Theological Seminary, on "New England Theology," in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, (vol. 9), says, "New England theology is Calvinism in an improved form. It does not pretend to be a perfect system. But Edwards and Hopkins reiterated the wish and hope that their successors would add to the improvements that the Genevan faith had already received." This highly essential improvement we suppose Channing has now accomplished, by declaring that the progress of the age and the spirit of the Gospel is effectually overthrowing a system of faith that is acknowledged by its advocates to be imperfect.

The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, on the doctrine of *Election*, (vol. 8 of his Sermons), says, "I will not venture to judge the Lord, but I do think it altogether incompatible with his goodness that he should have made a creature, and, as a creature, have condemned

it to misery." But if he made a creature with the fore-knowledge that misery would be its eternal portion, what is the difference whether he condemned it or not, seeing that such a state was to be its ultimate destiny? He continues by saying, "But man has lost all his rights as a creature. If he ever had any he has sinned them away. Our first parents have sinned, and we, their children, have attainted ourselves, by high treason against our liege Lord and Sovereign. All that a just God owes to any of us on the footing of our own claim, is wrath and displeasure. If he should give us our due, we should no longer remain on praying ground, breathing the air of mercy." Thus for doing only what the Lord (who knew all his works from the beginning), created us with a nature to do, we are theologically supposed to be deserving of nothing more than his displeasure and wrath. And if he had given us our due, for doing only what his omniscience knew we would do, we would not have been permitted to occupy praying ground, or breathe the air of mercy! What inconsistency! when he is so loud in proclaiming God's goodness by saying, "Some of you have heard my voice for these ten years: I ask you whether you have heard me utter a single sentence which at all contradicts the doctrine of God's great goodness?" But what sentiment could he utter more calumnious to God's goodness than such doctrine as he preaches? He further says, "God is love: he willeth not the death of any, but had rather that



all should come to repentance." But God created all things according to his *will*; and if ruin is the eternal portion of all who fail to comply with certain theological dogmas, whose *will* is it, if it is not God's will? It certainly cannot be consistent with their own will, or wish. Are they to be responsible for the issue of God's works which are at variance with the desire for happiness that he has implanted in their natures? If God had not made them as they are, they certainly never would have become the victims of such ruin and misery as the Christian system of theology teaches will be their final destiny. And if God would *rather that all men should come to repentance*, they would come to it without delay; for when He, as *almighty*, wishes a purpose accomplished, it is done in accordance with his desire. It is a sorry conception of God to say he would *rather* that something be performed in a manner agreeable with his pleasure, and then be denied the satisfaction of such an enjoyment. Such limitations to his power and pleasure would detract so seriously from his Godship, as to render his claim to Deity exceedingly doubtful.

On a recent occasion after returning from church, in company with, and to the residence of an estimable lady acquaintance, whose conversation flowed in eloquent strains on the subject preached upon, in which the minister described the hatred with which the true Christian looked upon sin,—I asked her if she did not think that God approved of sin? To a look which seemed to indicate doubt

whether my interrogation was made in sincerity, I said that an *Almighty* being who did not appreciate evil could easily abolish it. To which she replied that God's thoughts and ways were so much higher than our thoughts and ways, that we were unable to see the divine purposes he was accomplishing in suffering sin to abound—though in itself repugnant to his feelings. I then inquired if she did not think it derogatory to the reputed *divinity* of a Being so exalted and holy as she supposed God was, to be effecting his *purposes* through the perpetuation of sin, whereby, according to our theology, he was condemning the overwhelming portion of his intellectual creatures to eternal ruin, when he could with equal ability as an *omnipotent* Being, accomplish his *divine* measures through means whereby their temporal and eternal happiness would be secured, and his own glory equally promoted? On looking down at her feline companion, she remarked with an air of indifference, that she would do about as well in talking to her pet cat, as she would in attempting to set up an argument with a man who talked with no more sense than that! Owing to the dull prospect of obtaining any information concerning God's *purposes* from her limited stock of intelligence, I made no objection to her conversation being turned to the cat; and mention the circumstance merely to show the inherent bias by which the human mind is trammelled when influenced by pre-conceived religious prejudices, as based on a theological con-

ception of God that was conceived in a remote and mystical age, hostile to reason and humanity.

According to her ideas, God's abhorrence of sin, (which he is the author of by creating man with a nature to indulge in it), was so great, that it was only by looking at the *blood* of an innocent person, that he could be sufficiently reconciled to remit the punishment due an offender. If *justice*, according to that idea could only be satisfied by an act of *injustice*, how can such a contradiction to the qualities of charity and forgiveness inspire our hearts with love to God? If mercy was bought, or an equivalent given, instead of being freely bestowed, from whence do we arrive at our Christian views of mercy, so totally different from those emanating from God? As Jesus taught free forgiveness and pardon to offenders, to him then—not to God, belongs the merit of those heavenly qualities. But if it be theologically contended that Christ is God, then we are confronted with the ridiculous absurdity that God could only forgive men by shedding his own blood to satisfy his own sense of justice! Such a visionary notion once led the pious Richard Baxter to exclaim, "O the cost that God has been at for our sakes!" It is a sorrowful reflection though, to think that God should have been at such expense to purchase human redemption, and accomplish so little thereby. For of all the people who have lived since the days of Christ, not one in ten ever heard of him, and the

record of those who have heard of his death, compares not unfavorably with Heathenism.

What a romantic idea to suppose that the death of God should atone for a crime against God! or that God was so well pleased with Jewish and Roman barbarism in destroying the life of an eminent reformer in the most cruel and ignominious manner, that for the act he became reconciled to a whole guilty race, and then declared his willingness to forgive all who would believe such an inconsistency! According to the Christian theology a man may spend his whole life in indulging in vice, and break every command in the decalogue, but if he repents when he comes to death's door, God will graciously forgive him, whereby he takes his place in heaven by the side, and on an equality with the man who spent his earthly career wholly devoted to virtue and the cause of humanity. Thus a man may commit murder, but if he repents before he comes to the gallows, God mercifully forgives him through the *atoning blood* of Jesus, and takes him to heaven, where he spends a happy eternity in singing the high hallelujahs of the redeemed, while looking down at his unfortunate victim agonizing in the endless torments of perdition. But such theology is now tottering in the throes of final dissolution, in the face of the incontrovertible fact that it does not come within the operations of an *immutable* God to forgive sins; and that every one must suffer in the next life for his bad deeds

in this—though perhaps not in orthodoxy's *everlasting* hell.

The present Christian theological idea of God is evidently behind the advanced state of Judaism, if we may be allowed to judge from a recent address of the Rev. Dr. Felsenthal—a liberal Jew—at Chicago. In giving his exposition of Judaism, (as quoted from the *Banner of Light*), he inquires, "Do we Jews teach a God incarnate? A God who ate, and drank, and slept, and suffered and died. A God by whose blood the sins of mankind are atoned for? Do we teach that our God is so cruel as to give over to eternal perdition those who do not believe as we do? Do we not, on the contrary, explicitly teach that every good man of whatever creed and whatever nationality he may be, will participate in salvation?" etc.

The Rev. H. W. Beecher, on the "Patience and Long-Suffering of God," in endeavoring to rid his hearers of the pantheistic idea of God embodied in laws, and to cultivate belief in a personal God whose thoughts and feelings constitute his laws, says, "If God be one who says, 'I saw the end from the beginning; I know that all is going on right, and I will not trouble myself with these matters,' we might as well have no God, so far as his influence upon us is concerned." If our system of theology is to be considered the thoughts and feelings of a personal God, and as constituting his laws,—in what way does the distracted condition of the moral world vindicate his influence as a

Being of *almighty* power and *infinite* goodness in their favor? While he portrays God to be the dearest friend we have, the question naturally arises,—How can his creatures reciprocate such love and affection as could emanate from a being who holds them subject to an eternal curse for the sin of an individual who lived thousands of years before they were born? God's love would have shone forth more brilliant if he had never created any human beings, than it does under such an ungenerous system of theology as has been invented by the biblical authors, and still adhered to by some progressive people who possess a liberal share of intelligence.

He further says, "It is this conception of sinning against God as a person that has always been the most powerful restraint, with me, and that I have found to be the most powerful with other men." If Beecher, and other men, are restrained more effectually from indulging in vice through fear of giving offence to a personal God, and experiencing the threatened punishment, than through a disinterested desire to do right,—in what way is their devotion to religion or God-worship any more sincere or commendable than the conduct of a man who forbears violating the civil laws of the land merely through fear of detection and the consequent punishment? The doctrine that God is a person of august majesty, endowed with great feeling and love for his creatures, and that they should reciprocate it by obedience and love, fear and awe in



return, or else realize the terrible consequences of his eternal wrath, was doubtless the best conception, or the most efficacious mode that ancient reformers could arrive at for the suppression of vice; and was probably well adapted to the feeling and circumstances connected with a despotic age, when delusion and fear were the most popular means of effecting devotional and virtuous measures among the ignorant and vulgar masses. But that system of teaching the nature and qualities of God is fast melting in the crucible of modern intelligence and criticism—soon to take its place with such effete notions as that of doing God service by torturing and martyring men for dissenting from the established religious faith.

Though the sympathetic nature of mankind is well calculated to establish faith in a sympathetic God; and belief in an affectionate loving Father, efficacious in producing the most happy frame of mind that we aspirants for immortal glory can fortify ourselves in, yet we have not the least tangible evidence that a personal God of human affection and mutual sensibility superintends the affairs of men; and the idea that a reciprocity of feeling and love exists between him and his conceited devotional subjects, is merely the result of imagination superinduced by its congeniality, without any scientific or philosophical foundation.

Beecher further says, "The sages of the past could not have stood an examination before a common village school mistress of to-day." If such be

the case, how are we to suppose the prophets and apostles would come off in an examination before such critical and skeptical moral philosophers as Bunsen or Strauss, Davis or Tuttle? He also says, "Science is now making the swaddling clothes of Christianity:" when in reality, science and philosophy are making a new and fashionable dress for it to suit the time, and supercede the *swaddling clothes* which, with the use of eighteen centuries, have become inadequate to meet the religious demands of a progressive age. This view is confirmed by his own language when on the "State of Christianity to-day," he says, "I will admit, too, that the devotional spirit of our day is changing. It ought to change. Fear and awe are the first forms in which the devotional spirit exercises itself. They belong to the childhood of religion. Now, as progress in intelligence raises men to a better conception of God, as the new spirit reveals man's place in creation more clearly than it was known in the beginning of time, there will be a new mode of reverence, a new method of devotion," (vol. 2, p. 471).

The European revivalist Haldane, takes ground that the sin of Adam is as truly ours as it was his; and that it is not made ours by imputation, but is imputed to us because it is ours. And in defence of the doctrine says, "It is becoming in the believer to say, I fully acknowledge, and humbly confess, on the testimony of God, that I am guilty of

Adam's sin;" etc. Yet he makes no attempt to explain such incongruous and unreasonable doctrinal sentiment, so seriously in conflict with the growing religious feeling of the day. In vindication of such theory he inquires—in reply to Prof. Stuart's negative argument, "Can God impute to man anything that is not true?" But we claim that evidence is wanting to show that such a Pauline and Augustinian charge is the imputation of God; inasmuch as such sentiment cannot be sustained on principles of paternal goodness and philanthropy.

St. Augustine, in his "Expositions on the Book of Psalms," (Ps. 69, vol. 3), says, "God is a sort of substance; for what is no substance is nothing at all." As John says God is *love*,—it would be interesting to know how much *substance* there is in such *love* as would incite him to accuse one man with the guilt of another, and punish a new created soul for an act which took place thousands of years anterior to its existence? Such religious sentiment is evidently as false in facts and philosophy as it is slanderous to God and Divinity. Subversive to justice and repulsive to humanity as such doctrine is, it nevertheless continues to form a foundation stone in the Christian superstructure of belief in the nineteenth century.

Richard Baxter, on "Original Sin," says, "I doubt not but if Adam had never sinned, yet, (supposing the same covenant to stand), if his sons had sinned, we should have been guilty of it as we are of his sins;" etc. According to that idea, if one

of Adam's sons had continued perfect, and the other have sinned, there would have been one portion of the human race that would have continued perfect and immortal in this life, while the guilty part would have been condemned to death in this life and eternal punishment hereafter.

As there is no propriety or justice in punishing except for the purpose of reforming the offender, or making an example for others, the Christian doctrine of God eternally punishing his creatures merely for the purpose of seeing them suffer, renders him a being of vindictive malevolence that surpasses all human malignity. And if the theological doctrine of an *angry* God damning the souls of his subjects and sending them to hell, had never been preached or conceived, human beings never would have thought of damning one another in their fits of anger, and verbally sending each other to hell in supposed imitation of God.

Prof. Bascom, of Williams College, on *Utilitarianism*, says, "If a being could be so thoroughly malignant as to make malice a constant, an intense source of pleasure, this fact would go far to abate his criminality. Nay, if he were able to show that to him, so constituted, malice was, and would remain, a greater enjoyment than benevolence, the moral sense would approve the action, and give him the satisfaction of moral integrity." It must then be on that principle alone that God can take pleasure in forever punishing his creatures, for a cause that was unavoidable to them, without im-

peaching his goodness. What an idea to form of a *good* God!

Dr. Dwight, in maintaining the doctrine of condemnation for the sin of Adam, confesses his inability to explain theory so irreconcilable with justice. And in testimony of its incongruity to the charitable feeling that pervades the minds of men devoted to the cause of humanity, Dr. Watts, in zealously defending the doctrine against Dr. J. Taylor, says, "I am not fond of it. No, I would gladly renounce it because of some great difficulties attending it." Though J. Wesley, defends Watts against Taylor, yet he, with that spirit of philanthropy which invariably to a greater or less degree characterizes the human heart, inquires, "How can a wise, just and good God, place his creatures in such a state that the scale of evil should preponderate?" Thus the doctrine, which is taught to have emanated from a holy God, is so repugnant to the finer feelings of his noblest creatures, that even its advocates are themselves confounded to know how to believe it.

Yet, Albert Barnes, in the *Introduction* to his "Notes on the Epistle to the Romans," says, "The simple *fact* is here stated that that sin, (of Adam), was followed by the sin and ruin of all his posterity. Yet he offers no explanation of the *fact*. He leaves it as indubitable; and as not demanding an explanation in the argument—perhaps as not admitting it. This is the whole of his doctrine on that subject. Yet men have not been satisfied with that."

We inquire how can intellectual minds—progressive in reason and humanity be *satisfied* with doctrinal teaching so much at variance with their natural intuitions relative to the ordinations of Divinity? The acknowledged *fact* that men of enlarged and charitable minds are beginning to discard it, manifestly shows that according to the natural order of human progress in mental and intellectual development instituted by the Divine principle, a critical and inquisitive period in the history of man has arrived, when the human mind can no longer content itself in the belief that a vague and unexplainable affirmation of an enthusiastic religious reformer in a delusory period of the world, constituted a *fact*; as theologians of the antique order—like the Jewish Sanhedrim and priesthood in the days of Christ, would have us believe.

He next sagely says, “If men desire to *understand* the epistle of Paul, and avoid difficulties, they should be willing to leave it where *he* does; and this single rule would have made useless whole years and whole tomes of controversy.” Upon that unedifying principle, the worthy annotator might himself have done as well as the apostle, by advancing some unauthorized and indefensible doctrinal sentiment at which he could make no attempt to elucidate, and then advise his readers to leave it where he did, to prevent controversial difficulties concerning it. Thus deprived of exegetical resources to arraign his theory at the bar of justice



and reason, he would discover that such a mode of teaching was inadequate to satisfy the human mind in an age fraught with biblical criticism and free inquiry after divine truth. For, as Prof. Jowett, of Oxford University, says, "Doubt comes in at the window, when inquiry is denied at the door." Such advice may have been better adapted to the days of Thomas A. Kempis—which truly devoted monk, (more than four hundred years ago), said, "The profitable reading of the holy scriptures is frequently interrupted by a vain curiosity which prompts us to examine, discuss and labor to comprehend those parts which should be meekly and submissively passed over." But the age for passing over without discussion or examination, language that is said to be the word of God, has, like the allegorical mode of exegesis, adopted by some of the patristic Fathers in the church, passed by, and been superceded by one of free inquiry and criticism.

The position of modern biblical critique is well illustrated by an English Churchman, in the *Bampton Lectures* at Oxford, when he says, "We stand in the presence of forms of doubt which press us more nearly than those of former times, because they do not supercede Christianity by disbelief, but disintegrate it by eclecticism, which comes in the form of erudition, unknown in former times, appealing to new canons of truth;" etc.

Concerning this theological intricacy which Paul has entangled Christian expositors in, the gifted and

exemplary Belize Pascal, said, "The knot of our condition makes so many turnings and windings in this abyss, that man is more inconceivable without this mystery, than the mystery is inconceivable to man." But if man *is* inconceivable to himself, the fact would not justify an ancient religionist in fabricating a mysticism which involves him in an inconceivable mystery in regard to his relative position with God and redemption, so much at variance with reason and justice as to be incapable of solution on the common sense principles of humanity.

Dr. Mosheim acknowledges that the primitive Christians used the same terms employed by the Heathen, and adopted some of the rites and ceremonies of which their renowned mysteries consisted. And when Paul said, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God," his mind was no doubt inflated with the Pagan Eleusinian mysteries, which had become famous in Grecian mythology. And such is the importance still attached to mysteries in the Christian theology, that the Rev. J. Pearson, in his *Prize Essay* on the "Causes, Aspects and Agencies of Infidelity," says, "Strip Christianity of its mysteries, and you strip it of its glory."

A. J. Davis, styles *mystery* the vehicle of all ancient systems of religion, and in his *Arabula*, says, "It is the office of enlightened reason to investigate all mysteries, to search their meanings, to strip off the tales and trappings of superstition; and, finally, to discern the under-current of Truth,

in the contradictory and apparently irreconcilable events and personages of history." But we read in the *Gospel* according to St. Emma, "Oh mystery! thou art indeed the mother of the abominations of the earth. Oh mystery! can there be truth and mystery together? Is it a possibility that God's works, if he be our Father, should be a mystery to us, his children?" This leads us into serious contemplation whether *enlightened reason* will ever successfully fulfil its *office*.

The supposed necessity of conceding to the belief that all mysticism contained in the Bible is the inspired word of God, is shown by Bishop Butler, when, in his *Analogy* he says, "He who denies the *Scriptures* to be from God on account of such difficulties, may with equal justice deny that the world is the work of God." But Dr. A. Clarke, famous for learning and antiquarian research in defence of the Bible, when commenting on 1 Cor. 15: 4, candidly says, "I do not know of one proof in the New Testament, where its *writings* or any *part of them* is called the *Scriptures*." As this inequitable and embarrassing doctrinal point, that the race is responsible for the sin of their progenitor, is confined to the New Testament record, which was composed in an age of the world when mysteries and abstruse teaching had become popular in the various systems of Pagan worship,—Paul's theory then, according to the testimony of that eminent commentator, stands without *Scriptural* evidence of being Scripture. Its claim then to being the word of

God is challenged through lack of evidence to prove it Scripture. Thus the denial that such recondite and untenable doctrine emanated from God, would by no means be so presumptuous, as a denial that the world was made by him, as Butler vouches; for a man can easily teach sentiment that harmonizes with his impressions, but to create a world would be outside of his capacity.

Bishop Stillingfleet on "Scripture and Mysteries," says, "Truly no men (by their own authority), can pretend to a right to implose on others, any mysteries of faith, or any such things as are above their capacity to understand." Evidence that Paul claimed no higher authority than himself in his instructions to the Corinthian church, is shown by such language as,—“That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting,” (2. Cor. 11: 17). In writing to the same church he also says, “And I *think* also that I have the spirit of God,” (1. Cor. 7: 40). He no doubt *thought* he had the *spirit* of God when he invoked the Lord to reward Alexander the coppersmith according to his works, (2. Tim. 4: 14). As he had informed the Romans that if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his, it is astonishing that he should utter a prayer for the coppersmith evincing a spirit so contrary to the spirit and teaching of Christ. As he was then arraigned before Nero the second time, and expected soon to suffer martyrdom, the inference is that such an unforgiving spirit was reconcilable with his feel-

ing in prospect of shortly standing before his God: or else was unconsciously pronouncing his own condemnation.

That noted reformer George Fox, on the "Living God of Truth, and the World's God," says, "And the world's God hath its ministers, prophets, apostles, and hirelings, to make a trade with the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, with the natural languages and arts; and this they sell at great rates where they can get the greatest parsonages, or bishopricks, or get the most for it; and they preach up to the people that it is impossible to obtain victory over sin here, which burdens the creature and causeth it to groan; which sin came into man and woman, and brought the curse by their disobedience;" etc. (p. 734 of his Works, Lon. Ed). Thus according to this eminent spiritual teacher of Christianity, all this difficulty about Adam's sin being saddled on his posterity, originated with the *world's* God, while the *living God of truth* took no interest or part in the concern.

The framers of the Presbyterian "Confession of Faith," in the first *Article* on the "Fall of Man," say, "Our first parents being seduced by the subtilty of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory." The assumption that God purposed to *order to his own glory*, the eternal ruin of the great portion of Adam's posterity, which is theologically represented to have resulted

from it, cannot be looked upon by a friend of human welfare, in any other sense than an allegorical satire on his divinity, and contumelious assault on the name of that goodness they so abundantly ascribe to him.

Dr. Whelpley, in the name of the New England divinity, (as quoted by E. Beecher), says, "The idea that all the numerous millions of Adam's posterity deserve the ineffable and endless torments of hell, for a single act of his before any one of them existed, is repugnant to that reason which God has given us, and subversive to all conceptions of justice. I hesitate not to say that no scheme of religion ever propagated amongst men, contains a more monstrous, a more horrible tenet. The atrocity of this doctrine is beyond comparison. The versions of the Koran, the fictions of the Sadder, the fables of the Zendavesta, all give place to this: Rabbinical legends, Brahminical vagaries, all vanish before it." Thus when a benevolent advocate of the precepts and principles taught by Jesus, declares a prominent tenet of the religion propagated by the Apostle Paul to be more abhorrent in its nature than any sentiment to be found within the range of Paganism, it may be taken for strong evidence that the old Pauline doctrine on that subject is losing its hold on the minds of a philanthropic and progressive Christian community.

Though we are obliged to concede to the biblical writers due regard for the intrinsic value of the moral instruction afforded by them to us, yet if all



their writings had fell a sacrifice to the ravages of time, like most other ancient religious records, there is in man, notwithstanding his sinfulness, a sufficient element of goodness to have framed a moral code for religious life, in no way inferior to what we have received from them. And we find the rude and sensuous idea of a Divine being as conveyed by Moses and his successors to be so irrelevant with the philanthropy and pneumatology of a riper age; together with the irrational conceptions of his attributes relative to justice, in condemning the whole race to ruin for the sin of one man—as taught by the most consequential New Testament writer—so seriously at variance with the religious intuitions of an age fraught with reason and humanity, that we are irresistibly forced to the conclusion that the Bible furnishes no reliable information concerning Deity in relation to the affairs of the world.

Then, when thrown on our natural resources, the conclusion is, that no *personal* God, Devil, or Christian clergyman, could have rendered the moral or physical system of the universe different from what it is; for let there be a God personal or impersonal, a *Him*, or an *It*, or any gender or combination of genders to suit the fancy of believers, every thing is apparently as it is, because it could not have been anyother how. For a personal God could not have prevented his own existence, any more than we could have counteracted our being; and it is therefore our manifest duty to make the

best of our condition under the circumstances that we find it, by improving thereon to the extent of our ability. It is clear to the unsophisticated mind that no particular belief in relation to worship concerning what is adored as *Deity*, can be essential to salvation, for if an all-wise and good God really presides over, and takes an interest in the welfare of his human creatures, he would unquestionably have made the fact so plain and convicting to the whole race, that there would have been no caviling or dissension on the subject. If it were not right in the dispensation of an overruling Providence for a diversity of opinion to exist in regard to his being and attributes, he would not have invested his creatures with capacity to fabricate such conflicting notions in relation to himself. To judge from our natural senses, in the absence of any positive proof that an *almighty* and intelligent agency superintends the affairs of the moral world, it is presumptive that an incomprehensible Original Cause, or Principle, permeating eternity as an *unavoidable* and Supreme power, controlling all things through an influence that might with propriety be termed Divine, forms a conception of Deity most consistent with the natural state and condition of the moral and physical world. For in estimating the deleterious effects of sin in this life, and its terrible consequences in the future, by the theological standard, no *Almighty* being of *infinite* goodness and omniscience, that could have prevented

the introduction and continuance of sin in the world, would have suffered it to abound.

Instead of the moral distraction and misery that to such a lamentable extent pervades the world, being the result of *evil*, produced by the violation of an alleged command or institution of God,—sin is obviously the legitimate issue of ignorance, rendered indispensable in the process of human development. And according to modern theosophy, the inexorable laws of God never have, nor ever can be broken. In the language of the poet,—

“What men call evil only is  
The germinating seed,  
From whence, by sure development  
Shall spring good fruit indeed.  
And man all evil will outgrow  
In spite of doubts and fears ;  
While faith and hope shall plume his wings  
To soar to brighter spheres.”

This unaccountable condition of the moral world in relation to God and its government, then leaves us with no other revelation or knowledge of God and the duty of divine worship, than that which is furnished by the exercise of reason, and the inspired intuitions which Nature has implanted within us. The various ideas of reformers, prophets, seers and sages, in all past history, conclusively show that no special belief concerning Deity could be adequately stereotyped to meet the unanimous views of people in former ages ; and it would perhaps be still more difficult of accomplishment in

the present dispensation of general literature, science, and philological criticism.

The church will of course declare such paradoxical sentiment to be as inimical to the welfare of the human family as the French infidelity of the last century, which culminated in the notorious and disastrous *reign of terror*. But it became manifest to the most progressive branch of God's offspring, that the old established faith was a failure in practice, and in attempting to overthrow the idea of a personal God, they ran wild on the doctrine of the soul's annihilation. As such melancholy sentiment only aggravated a deplorable state of religious affairs, a change is apparently now demanded on *spiritual* principles. If such an attainment does not prove a success in the cause of humanity, it cannot fail to defend our position that the economy of creation and its ultimate consequences is the result of what no power could avert; and controvert the theological assumption that the whole system is controlled by a self-existent personal God of infinite power and goodness with sin negatively considered. Though we may be accused with blasphemy by exemplary religionists of the day, for our sentimental expression in relation to Deity, yet it affords us some consolation to know that Jesus was indited under that charge by the orthodox church in his time; and congratulate ourselves with the fact that there is no risk of either being put to death for heresy, or worshipped as a god, like him, for that period of the world—at the ignorance of which we

trust God will never more have occasion to *wink*, has passed by.

Prof. Schmucker, in his "Errors of Infidelity, Illustrated and Refuted," when presenting the various ideas concerning God as espoused by the German, French, English and American infidels, who have wielded the pen in opposition to the orthodox theory, from Spinoza to Emerson, omits to state that the views entertained by any one of those whom he criticises are much less in conflict with sense and reason, in their most important bearings than the personal and irritable idea of God taught by Moses. This incongruity of Mosaic sentiment with modern judgment and rationalism, is the obvious cause of the different views concerning God or no God, that the church denounces as *infidelity*. The most important command in moral government that Moses claimed to receive from the Lord was not to kill. But no sooner had the Law been given, than he commanded the Levites to gird on their swords and kill their friends, neighbors and companions, (Ex. 32: 27), for which bloody violation of the Law, he was not even rebuked by the Lord. With such an idea of God and the conduct of his lawgiver, is it to be wondered at, that as society in the world advances in humanity and intelligence, infidelity increases? And fortunately for its growth, it was admitted at a recent session of the Presbyterian synod, that it "no longer appears in the coarse, vulgar, and disgusting mein of the past, but comes encompassed with the dignity

of science, and arrayed in the garniture of a polished and enchanting literature, or in the sacred garb of religion."

Dr. Cudworth, says, "It is evident that the Atheists themselves in those former times of Paganism, took it for granted that goodness was one of the essential attributes of Deity, whose existence they opposed;" etc. But they merely opposed the existence of such a Deity as the one conceived by Moses, and such a narrow system of theology in connection with it as the apostles based on his selfish views. What generous mind can recognize a *good* being in the construction of such a religious discipline as that which says, "Many are called and few chosen; strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it?" (Matt. 7: 14). Such theology devotes the overwhelming portion of the human family to an eternal existence where, according to the worthy Dr. Doddridge, "hell shall shut its mouth upon them forever, and the sad echo of their groans and outcries shall be lost amidst the hallelujahs of heaven." Is it strange that the Atheists should oppose the existence of a God who could endorse such a system of theology as that?

Dr. Paley on *Natural Theology*, endeavors to prove the goodness of God by saying that "the Deity has superadded *pleasure* to animal sensations, beyond what was necessary for any other purpose, for when the purpose, so far as it was necessary, might have been effected by the operation of pain."



But how does his *goodness*, in affording his creatures some pleasure in connection with the pain and misery with which this life abounds, compare with his malevolence in consigning the great portion of them to an eternity of wretchedness when the turmoils of this life are over? The Atheists could not see sufficient goodness in such an idea of God to answer them the purpose of Deity.

Dr. Buchanan, on "Modern Atheism," after quoting from Dr. Channing, evidence to show the influence of science in moulding the modern conceptions of Deity, himself says, "That the scientific study of nature, and especially of certain departments of physical inquiry, has often had the effect of deadening our sense of a present and presiding Deity, of obscuring or perplexing our views of the connection of God with his works, and virtually removing him from all efficient control over the creatures of his hands, is attested, not only by the published speculations of some, but also by the inward consciousness of many more, who have never avowed infidel sentiment to others, nor even, at least articulately to themselves." When Hebrew cosmology is taken into consideration, in connection with the inefficient control the Lord is represented to have exerted over the Israelites under the Mosaic economy and Levitical priesthood, combined with the miserable eternity that the apostolic discipline awards to the majority of the race, is it surprising that the scientific study of Nature

in connection with physical inquiry, should lead to such results as he deprecates?

Dr. Fitzgerald on the *Evidences*, states that after the writings of Cudworth and Stillingfleet, the deistical point of attack was gradually changed; and that after Hume and Gibbon, "Infidelity in England, apparently sheathed its sword, furled its banner and retired from the field." The change that has since come over the religious sentiment of the rising intellect of England, as acknowledged by orthodox theologians, corroborates the opinion that their orderly retirement from the battle-field had a wholesome effect on their discomfited antagonists.

Origen, who wrote more than any other ancient author in defence of Christianity,—when expressing his views in relation to Deity—as quoted from Cudworth's "Intellectual System of the Universe" (vol. 1, p. 738), says, As our body is made up of many members, and contained by one soul, so do I conceive, that the whole world is to be looked upon as one huge great animal, which is contained as it were by one soul, the virtue and essence of God." This is in agreement with the sentiment of that virtuous Greek reformer Zeno—founder of the Stoic philosophy, who maintained that the whole universe constitutes a *body*, of which God was the soul. Origen does not appear to have been in the least tinctured with trinitarianism, as shown by Prof. Bolton, in his Hulsean *Prize Essay*, on the "Evidences of Christianity," when he says, "Origen's

treatise *De Principiis*, likewise contains some material for our purpose, though it stands doctrinally charged with Neo-Platonism, and even *Arianism*." Paul, by saying, "In God we live, and move, and have our being," seems to have this generous Pagan idea of God embodied in all animated Nature, blended into the Christian faith, much more consistent with Platonic philosophy than Mosaic theopathy. For it would be a difficult thing for people to live, move, and have their being in such an apparition as Moses pretended to have seen descend in a cloud amid the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai. As he also states that the Lord came in fire that set the whole mountain to smoking; we find that Paul, when narrating the marvellous occurrence, (Heb. 12: 18-29), makes a sad blunder, in attempting to introduce Mosaism into Christianity in connection with Gentile philosophy by saying, "Our God is a consuming fire." The problem as to how we can live, move, and have our being in a *consuming fire*, remains for the theosophical genius of the admirers of his irreconcilable doctrine to elucidate.

Though Socrates declined to solve the question, or attempt to prove the existence of a personal God, yet he declared that spiritual existence was inwrought in the very constitution of things. But while Moses attempted to prove the existence of a personal God possessed with human qualities, he ignored the doctrine of spiritual existence. While Paul acknowledged spiritual existence, in agree-

ment with Grecian sentiment, he only injured his philosophy by corrupting it with Mosaism.

Neither Moses or Socrates, Zeno or Paul, knew any more about the great First Cause, than Spinoza or Swedenborg; and the philosophy of Protagoras,—"that which seemed to every one, was to him true, to whom it seemed—all truth and perfection being but seeming and relative;" might be aptly applied to the human mind respecting a religious belief concerning Deity. Paul, by adapting his discourse to suit the Corinthians, (Acts 17: 28), in expressing views in agreement with the Grecian sages, that we have our existence in God; and afterwards declaring to Timothy, (1 Tim. 6: 16)—who had been circumcised by him in accordance with the Jewish Law—that "God dwelt in light that no man could approach unto," must either have adopted the sentiment of Protagoras, or else without dubitation stand charged with teaching irreconcilably contradictory doctrines. His manner of adapting his preaching to agree with his hearers for the purpose of gaining proselytes to Christianity, shows him to have been one of the most sagacious religious propagators of antiquity; and if he had not let the superstitious enthusiasm which he inherited from the Jews, preponderate reason and warp his judgment, he might have held rank in philosophy with the poets of Greece.

Though Philostorgius in his "Ecclesiastical History," extols Arius for impugning the divinity of the Son, yet he charges him with being involved

in the most absurd errors, because he affirmed that God could not be known, comprehended, or conceived by the human mind, not even by his *only begotten Son*. But it does not appear manifest that Jesus—in agreement with Arianism, either conceived or comprehended the ubiquity of God, or else, instead of teaching his disciples to address the Father in prayer as though he were located in another sphere, he would have instructed them to address him as an everywhere present God. And to infer that God's will is not done on earth as it is in heaven—for the accomplishment of which it was necessary for his disciples to pray, conveys but a limited idea of his omnipotence.

Dr. Henry, in paraphrasing the Lord's *Prayer*, says, "And we lament it, that thy will is so little done on earth, so many of the children of men being led captive by Satan at his will." Thus according to the Christian theology, Satan's will can be accomplished on earth without the aid of prayers, while the Lord's will is a failure with them. This leads us to wonder which is the most omnipotent—God or the Devil. The adherence of Jesus to the Jewish phraseology of speaking of God as though he dwelt above, does not appear so congenial to the human mind as the doctrine of Pythagoras on that subject; who taught that God was not seated above the world, and beyond the orb of the universe, as some were apt to suppose, but filled immensity with his presence.

Concerning the birth of this famous sage, the Rev. R. Taylor, in his *Diegesis*, says, "Pythagoras, as the name signifies, had been born under precisely the circumstances ascribed to Jesus Christ; having been the object of a splendid dispensation of prophecy, and his birth fortold by Appollo Pythus; his soul having descended from its primeval state of companionship with the divine Apollo," etc. But it is not to be supposed that there is any more truth connected with the story of his supernatural birth, than there is with the miraculous annunciation, conception and birth of Jesus. In regard to the latter, the Rev. J. Prince, in his "Lectures on the Bible," (Lec. 6), says, "If it were true that he was conceived by supernatural agency, is it not probable that he would have referred to that circumstance, in some way, when asserting that he came to do the will of Him who sent him; that he was commissioned by the Father, etc.? The account, if literally construed, involves some gross absurdities; and, as a whole, it bears the indelible stamp of fiction. It has no parallel, except in Heathen Mythology: and many eminent Christian believers have rejected it as fabulous. . . . Many of the most learned and excellent men who have studied the Bible, have come to the conclusion that the whole story is an interpolation—something invented after the several periods at which Matthew and Luke wrote, and foisted into the books which bear their names."

Though Jesus adopted the Oriental custom of



praying, yet Pythagoras could not see the practical utility of praying to the Lord for what He knew we stood in need of, and what he as bountifully supplied us with without praying for as he did with. And it certainly cannot add to the pleasure of a parent who feels duty bound to provide for his children, to hear them continually calling on him for what he is supplying them with, though expressions of gratitude may be appreciative. By being trained to pray, in accordance with Christian injunctions, we would feel almost derelict in duty by neglecting it; when at the same time it is evident that with all our praying for the Lord to give us this day our daily bread, if we did not work and earn it by providing for ourselves, the Lord would soon let us starve to death calling on him for it.

Howitt, on the subject of Grecian divinity, says, "The Greek was a seer and a poet, who lived in a spiritual as well as a physical world, and, therefore, the emanations of his mind proceeded from a universal harmony. . . . God showed himself gracious to them, as to all His earthly children, and permitted them to find Him in their own manner," etc. He further inquires, "Now what is the real result of all this Grecian evidence of philosophers, poets, and historians—of those men whose writings the whole civilized world at this hour places higher than any other human learning, and in which all our wealthier youths are industriously indoctrinated as the noblest examples of man's intellectual sagacity?"

Though the Hebrew idea is still professedly adhered to among the most progressive and enlightened portion of the human race, yet it is evident that the *natural* wisdom of the Greeks takes precedence over the *super-natural* of the Hebrews in the most intellectual minds. Dr. Ennemozer says, "The poetic talent being expanded to such a degree with them, it was perfectly natural that they should have a proper attention to the inner voice of the mind." The records of such men as Hippocrates, Galen, Dionysius of Hallicarnasses, and numerous others also give attestation to the advanced state of Grecian learning.

The acknowledged superiority of Greek literature over Hebrew theosophy, leaves it mentally incontrovertible that the teachings of Christian theology as derived from Mosaism—which discard the use of reason, can never satisfy the human soul, or solve the mighty problem implied in the Greek inscription on the Athenian altar—to the *unknown God*. Theologians and metaphysicians may advance their vague and abstruse theories about the Godhead in trinity or in unity, as based on the conjectural intuitions of a mytho-tragical or religio-fanatical dispensation when ignorance joined hands with superstition, and bring their recondite theological mathematics into equational array to establish the question of essential existent personality of an Infinite Mind, but however theopathetically they may be skilled in godology, the *un-known* of Deity will doubtless forever continue

to baffle all human knowledge. Not till eternity is completed can we look for any definite satisfaction on the subject.

In reply to an inquiry concerning *God*, made to Demosthenes—through the mediumship of a modern Spiritualist, that sage is reported to have said, "After having walked the highway of the celestial worlds for more than two thousand years, I am so far lost and overpowered amid the splendors of infinitude I can say nothing. Height on height beyond the penetration of finite vision, I see the dim outlines of a deific universe; I feel the flood tides of Divinity flowing down through all the avenues of my immortal being; I hear peal after peal of archangel eloquence ringing through the endless archways of the empyrian, evermore sounding in my ears the name of God. But I am silent and dumb!"

Theodore Parker, says, "To form an adequate conception of Deity, and to set this forth in words is not only above human capability, but impossible in the nature of things. The abyss of God is not to be fathomed save by him who is all in all." Perhaps Luther was not far out of the way when he said God was a blank, on which nothing was found except what had been written by the human mind.

The Rev. O. B. Frothingham, in a recent *Lecture*, (Boston) when speaking of the old ideas of revelation, said, "Spiritualism shows how little it had done for the doctrine of immortality. The many phases of Pos-

itivism show how unstable is its demonstration of God. The Athenians built an altar to the *unknown God*, and declined Paul's offer to reveal him. Christianity has an Unknown God, the Father; Christ is the revealed God. We build our altar, therefore to the Unknown God; not in fear or sadness, not in doubt or disbelief, but in humility and joy." (*Universe*, Feb. 3, -1870). As the "Banner of Light," (Feb, 12), charges him with assailing everything and believing nothing, the inference is, that in *building* his altar to Deity, his purpose is to *work* out his salvation, without confining his faith on the subject to any dogmatic *belief* concerning what is manifestly incomprehensible to finite minds.

H. W. Beecher on the "Love of God," says, "There are two notions of God that have more or less prevalence among men. One represents him as a vast organ located in the very centre of heaven, and giving forth majestic sounds when touched, and silent when not. The other represents him as a Being that is never silent, never still, never unheard; one that has such a nature that if there were not an angel in heaven, if there were not a man on earth, if there were nothing in all creation from side to side, there is that in himself that would forever make him overflow with taste, and feeling, and love. The one ascribes to him a nature that is merely susceptible of being called out on the application of the motive. The other ascribes to him a nature that pours itself abroad in the earth by reason of its own fullness and richness. It is

the latter of these two ideas that I hold, and supposed the Scriptures to teach." But whether he derived his magnanimous views of God from the *Scriptural* teaching of Moses, that God only held friendly intercourse with one tribe of people on earth, or from that of Paul's teaching, that he accepted only those who made profession of certain dogmas of faith, we are unable to tell.

Mrs. Cora L. V. Tappan, says, "It is conceded by all nations, that there are one or more principles in the universe, which control and guide it, which are the radiant sources and the life of all things; and consequently, are infinite, supreme, and eternal. Concentrating all religious ideas together, we have this one, which is most consistent with reason, with intuition, with revelation; it is the great Jehovah, or infinite Spirit, when literally translated from the Hebrew, signifying the Future, the Present, and the Past, that which has been, which is, and which ever shall be. . . . Now in what manner this Jehovah, this Divine mind acts, is not for us to tell. (American Spiritualist). But the Hebrews, from whom she seems to derive her conceptions of God, could *tell* how he *acted*. Malachi (2: 3), tells us that he spread dung in the faces of the priests, and cursed their blessings! Though Hengstenberg and Vitringa hold the name of Malachi as merely *official*, yet Origen—according to Bishop Horne, (Int. vol. 2, p. 984), supposed him to be an angel sent from heaven. As his emendations in settling the Scripture canon were not generally

disputed, Malachi should be considered the highest authority for the accredited actions of the Lord. And according to the testimony of Ezekiel, (4: 12, 15), that prophet was commanded by Jehovah to prepare some of the same kind of material that Malachi says was spread in the faces of the priests, and bake it as barley-cakes, for his diet! Then after acting so undignified towards his priests and prophets, he declared that he would be to the house of Ephraim as a *moth*, and to the house of Judah as *rottenness*! (Hos. 5: 12).

Renan says, "The glory of the Semitic race is this,—that from its earliest days it grasped that notion of Deity which all other peoples have had to adopt from its example, and on faith of its declarations." Are we to suppose that *all people* have had to adopt such indecorous and ungraceful notions of Divinity as that conveyed by the Jewish prophets, on the faith of their declarations? "Far off in abstractions," says Baring Gould, "the Hebrew discerned his God; around and in himself the Greek discovered his." On the subject he further says, "Pantheism gives us an absolute God, anthropomorphism gives us a personal God, materialism supplies a link of cohesion. Fuse these ideas, absorb materialism in pantheism, and pantheism in theism, and the result is what I may call phusi-theism. Reasoning from final causes, the existence of a Creator is obtained; for the presence of mind working in Nature is demonstrated. It is clear and satisfactory proof to the ordinary understanding



of man; but it proves nothing more than a finite God. If this idea be supplanted by another obtained from ontological arguments, the result is an infinite God, impersonal and yet personal, immanent in Nature, and yet not of or by Nature, omnipotent and omniscient, influencing and moulding the material world, which is in Him, and He in it." Which latter system of manufacturing a God has a much more agreeable lean toward Platonism than Mosaism.

Mrs. Emma Hardinge says, "The Spiritualist says *I believe in God*, and goes back to the darkest days of savageism and sees the hand writing that is imprinted on the tablets of the human heart; and then coming forward to the highest conditions of civilization, asks if we have outgrown this primeval belief. All other theories, affirmations of belief except those which are written in the intuitions of the spirit, which are an integral part of humanity itself, fall off and sink into the night of oblivion, or disappear in the mists of error. . . . I shall not reason upon the subject of a God, nor answer you when you would compel me to prove the fact of the soul's existence after death. It is a truth *within* me, and I can no more explain this question than I can answer how I know anything, or what intelligence is, (Religio-Philosophical Journal).

Hudson Tuttle, in the *Conclusion* of his "Career of the God-Idea in History," says, "In that misty land of clouds and conjecture, the theologian and

metaphysician have an ample field to wander, and perhaps they may bring forth something which the present methods of science cannot obtain; but the experience of the past does not hold out the inducement of a very ardent hope. They can no more pass words for thought, however intricately interwoven. The age has outgrown them and their methods. What we know, what we can prove, is its inexorable demand. Beyond matter and its laws may stand an Infinite Supreme; but in the absolute impossibility of understanding him, in the total absence of any revelation except nature to us from him, we can learn nothing by reasoning on his attributes, and must rest content."

## CHAPTER XIII.

View of the Devil as theologically incorporated into the works of Deity—Henstenburg—Watson—Meade—Jones—Chrishna—Sherlock—Dwight—Hare—Ecce Deus—Tholuck—Veracity of the Serpent vindicated—Tree of Life—Kennicott—Burnet—Paul's idea of Satan—Milton—Dante—Tasso—Japanese conception of the Devil—Plumer—H. W. Beecher—E. Beecher—Cumming—Edwards—Berg—W. Thompson—Anselm—Josephus—Lardner—Calmet—Emmons—Neander—Luther.

According to the Christian theology, the Serpent, or Devil, is not only the author of all the sin and misery with which this life abounds, but also of the eternal ruin of the soul in future. This sad result he is said to have accomplished by causing Adam to transgress, or disobey an insignificant and puerile command,—not to eat some good tasted fruit, which God caused to grow for no other purpose than to be eaten. But as there was no threat of *future* punishment in connection with the violation of the command, it conclusively shows that it was not intended, for the obvious reason that such doctrine had not yet been conceived or propagated. Though in the later times of the Psalmists and Prophets, some vague ideas are occasionally thrown out by some of them, intimating that they had a faint idea of a future, but not sufficiently spiritually enlightened to make such doctrine a

subject of much significance, or object of special interest.

The doctrine that a *Devil* existed as the tempter of souls was not conceived in the early history of the race; nor was any such notion adopted even when the Jewish priesthood was instituted. Such a conception was the product of a later period; when it was likewise considered judicious to establish a subterranean pandemonium below, as the chief seat of his empire—the gates and keys to the entrance of which are noticed in the New Testament. Such doctrine was an offspring of the human brain in consequence of having advanced in their conceptions of God and the destiny of man.

As the Serpent was instrumental in causing Eve to bring forth children as a judgment for her disobedience, (Gen. 3 : 16), the inference is, that if the transgression had not taken place, Adam and Eve alone would have continued to embrace the whole human family; unless the Lord had adopted some other means of replenishing the earth. Thus if it was the original purpose to have the earth populated with human beings in the manner it is, the Serpent accomplished an important part in the economy of creation or procreation. And Moses by elevating a brazen imitation of him on a pole in the wilderness for the people to look to for the purpose of being cured—instead of looking to God, very significantly rendered him a proper object of adoration for such people as he controlled; as it

was an undisguised manifestation of idolatry scarcely paralleled in Paganism.

Dr. Henstenberg, in the *Protevangelium* to his "Christology of the Old Testament," maintains that the tempter in Eden was not a symbolical signification of the evil spirit, but a genuine serpent. This leads us to wonder in what dialect he conversed; and whether it is a living or dead language! He holds that a figurative interpretation is rendered impossible from the fact that the account stands in a book of strictly historical character. But in presenting such allegorical views as to suppose that a *real serpent* was gifted with the faculty of holding conversation, and endowed with more wisdom and sagacity than those intellectual beings created in the image of God, he should have remembered that history then, is no criterion for history now.

Dr. Watson in his "Theological Dictionary," in maintaining that the Jewish or Christian idea of a Devil was not derived from the oriental philosophy of the Persians and Manicheans—who describe him as equivalent to an evil principle, says, "For the Devil of the Jewish system, is a creation as much as any other being in the universe, and is liable to be controlled by omnipotence,—an attribute which they ascribe to God alone." Such an idea is much more disreputable to the Deity, and ignominious to the Devil, than the oriental mythology; for it represents the latter to be a mere *created* tool in the

hands of Omnipotence to work folly and wickedness.

The right Rev. W. Meade, in his "Bible and Classics," says, "In India, also two sculptured figures are yet extant, in one of the oldest pagodas; one of which represents Chrishna, an incarnation of Vishnu, trampling on the crushed head of the serpent, while the other exhibits the poisonous reptile encircling the deity in its folds, and biting his heel." This leaves it unsettled where the myth concerning the Serpent, and the prophecy in regard to the seed of the woman bruising his head, as given in the Bible, originated. As Chrishna of India and Christ of Palestine apparently personate the same character, the conclusion is, that the accounts had a common origin. According to Sir W. Jones' investigation of the ancient religious records of India, Chrishna was as much noted for heroism as virtue, even in boyhood; by which it seems that the Christian theology has neglected to attribute to Christ the valor he merits for bruising the head of the Serpent when making an assault on his heel. As the birth of Chrishna antedates that of Christ some centuries, the Indian conception lays claim to the highest antiquity; though they share a common fate in the ordeal of modern criticism.

In recent attendance at Methodist prayer meeting, we were interested in hearing a good brother call most vociferously on the Lord to break the power of the Devil; which led us to wonder who he sup-



posed the Devil received his power from. For if the Devil *is* the author of evil, such a fact—according to the most enlightened principles of ratiocination, could not make sin a violation of God's laws, or he would not have created him with such ability. Why then pray so loudly for God to repeal the laws which were made in the infinitude of his wisdom? If such an evil agency in the form, or under the name of a Serpent had a real existence, it must necessarily have been included in the works of God, as Supreme Creator, all of which were pronounced *very good*. To argue that one of his creatures originally acted successfully in antagonism to him, is an absurdity that forcibly illustrates the theological incongruity necessarily involved in such a metaphysical hypothesis as that which implicates a *Divine* being in producing an *infernal* foe to himself, and the moral welfare of his creatures. As an almighty Creator, God could not have formed Satan for any other purpose than the one in which he is theologically presumed to have acted. And his foreknowledge of the object and office of a devil, would hold him responsible for his *devilish* conduct; as his acts would only be effecting the design or indirect purposes of God. Such theology or mythology, when philosophically considered, renders God the greatest d—l of the two!

Dr. Dwight, on the "Decrees of God," says, "But, if God did know, originally, all the actions of voluntary beings, and did not choose to prevent their existence in any case; then they were upon

the whole agreeable to his pleasure; or he chose that they should exist, when, upon the whole, they were contrary to his pleasure. That he could have prevented the existence of any actions whatever, if he pleased, we certainly know; because he could have prevented the existence of the beings whose actions they were. If they were upon the whole, contrary to his pleasure, and he yet chose that they should exist, then he chose that actions should exist, whose existence was upon the whole contrary to his choice; which is no other than a self-contradiction." And that is all our theological Devil amounts to—a *self contradiction*! Yet the originators of our system of theology have assumed the unwarrantable liberty of placing him in some important respects on an equality with God in heavenly dignity. As an instance,—the Jews worshipped God as the *Father*, and Christ told them that they were of their Father the Devil. And while Christ was styled the *Prince* of peace, the Devil was held to be the Prince of the power of the air; which elicits the fact that he was honored with titles on a parallel with God and Christ.

In regard to his reputed success over God in the garden, Bishop Horsley, when discoursing on *Prophecy*, says, "It could not therefore but be some comfort to them, (Adam and Eve), to hear the Serpent first condemned; and to see that however he had prevailed against *them*, he had gained no victory over *their Maker*, who was able to assert his own honor, and to punish this great author of

iniquity. If God was able to punish this *author of iniquity* for causing the violation of this command, he was also able to have adopted means beforehand that would have prevented its occurrence. And an *ounce* of prevention in such a case would have been more efficacious than a *pound* of cure, in the form of such curses as he then pronounced.

The presumption that a *Serpent*, or Satan acted successfully in opposition to the pleasure and approbation of an Omnipotent being,—when arrayed in conflict with skeptical philosophy, is sufficiently refuted by the rationalistic fact, that for any thing to be contrary to the wish or will of an *almighty* Being, would be irreconcilable with the omniscient attributes of Deity. All the works of God must necessarily be in harmony with the prescient wisdom of his original purpose. No evil can endure which any being has both the power and desire to remove. And as Prof. Hare says, "Any result must follow, which any being has both the power and will to accomplish." Then for a *divine* and *omnipotent* Being to alienate himself from his offspring—the human race—according to the theological charge, and hold them liable to eternal ruin in consequence of the intrigue of a serpent—created by him for no other apparent purpose, is a myth, too much at variance with a sense of divine goodness to be tolerated in a rational and common sense community.

But *Ecce Deus* in Reply to *Ecce Homo*, on "Eternal Punishment," apparently denies that God is

*almighty* in his attributes ; and if his omnipotence is not admitted, we readily conceive that his omniscience is questionable. And, if we commence divesting him of those high qualities, there will be no difficulty in reducing him to a mere nominal existence or nonentity. Our anonymous author says, "There need be no hesitation in declaring that God *cannot* annihilate a moral agent. If he could, would he not have annihilated the devil that vexed his beloved Son in the wilderness?" But why should he think that a *vexatious* temptation to Christ, and provoking to the Lord, when Paul supposed it an all-essential and divine requirement on the part of God, that he might thereby be enabled to succor those who should in like manner be tempted ? (Heb. 2: 18).

By exercising the reasoning faculty with which Nature or Divinity has invested moral and intellectual beings, it becomes apparent to all, that whether Deity be *almighty*, or but *limited* in power, infinite or finite, there could have been no practical utility in a Divine existence producing such an object as a personal devil to operate detrimental to the welfare of mankind. If—as Milton has poetically described this supposed arch-enemy of the human race, he was originally good, and banished from heaven on account of apostacy and sin, why should God reconstruct him in the form of a serpent to be an everlasting annoyance to him ? Or why should he after becoming too bad to remain in heaven, be divinely commissioned to teach the first

couple how to become as the Gods, by distinguishing between good and evil?

In a late conversation with a Presbyterian brother, who had been expressing his views in regard to the works of God, in creating all things good; I inquired why he should then place a serpent or Devil among them, possessed with power to overthrow his good works—thereby causing him to repent of having made man? He would not admit that the Devil exercised an influence over man with which God could not successfully contend, nor adduce any satisfactory reason why such a being was requisite in the works of Divinity to effect the moral ruin of man, but nevertheless declared that, according to his opinion it was right. But why do intelligent people believe a course of procedure to be right that is so much at variance with a common sense idea of God's infinitude and perfection? The answer is,—Because they have always been theologically taught that for some unaccountable cause, the Devil exerts more power in the moral world than God; and it is almost an impossibility for them to admit the truth of religious sentiment that conflicts with preconceived opinions superinduced by early education. We admitted with him that it is all *right*, but could not so recognize it when viewed from his standpoint of belief.

In the Gospel, this important character in the Christian theology is said to have been a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, for there was no truth in him, (John 8: 44). Dr.

Tholuck, in commenting on this text, says, "It has no reference *necessarily* to the *original* beginning of the history of man;" yet admits that his exposition is confronted with serious difficulties. Not only is there no account of any murder having been committed by him in the beginning of man's history, but unfortunately for the story, no evidence from his subsequent career can be produced that convicts him of any such crime. And the declaration of Christ that there was *no* truth in him is flatly contradicted by the narrative of his early history in reference to Adam and Eve. His paradisaical communication to Eve, gives his veracity a decided preference over that ascribed by the allegorist to the Lord. For the Lord said to the man that in the day he should eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he should surely die. But the Serpent told the woman that they should not thus die, but would, by eating the fruit, become as the Gods knowing good and evil. They did not die as the Lord said—according to the ordinary estimate of what constitutes a day, but lived to experience the truth of what the Serpent said, in regard to the wisdom they should inherit as a result of eating the fruit. The Lord then admitted the foreknowledge, and openly confessed the *truth* of what the Serpent had declared to Eve, in plain contradiction to what Christ said,—that there was *no* truth in him—when he announces to the other Gods,—“Behold the man has become as one of us to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand,



and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever," (Gen. 3 : 22). If Christ had not supposed the Serpent to have excelled God in wisdom, it is not to be presumed that he would have advised his disciples to be wise as serpents.

In agreement with an ancient notion that it was a virtuous necessity to keep the populace in ignorance, the primitive writer assumes that it was the Lord's intention not to have the human family elevated above the brutal creation, relative to knowing the moral difference between good and evil. The literary and scientific attainment then, which the race has since progressed to, must necessarily be ascribed to the violation of a command of God induced by the Serpent; which leaves the latter responsible for what knowledge the world has since acquired.

According to the account, there was a tree of life in the garden, accessible to Adam and Eve—the fruit of which they would be likely to indulge in if they remained there, (and which they had previous liberty to eat, and probably did partake of,) that possessed the remarkable power of restoring them to their pristine condition of being immortal. But the Lord evinced a determination not to let the fruit be used for the apparent purpose it grew; and in order to counteract the design of the Serpent in making man an everlasting monument of his untruthfulness, he found it obligatory on himself to drive man out of the garden, and place cherubim there with a flaming sword turning

every way to keep him from the tree of life. Thus from the drama of the narrative concerning the fall and ejection of the first couple from Paradise, the expulsion does not appear to have been the result of their disobedience, but merely an expedient that the Lord was unavoidably driven to, for the purpose of defeating the Serpent in his operations to convict him of an eternal falsehood.

If Ezekiel's account of cherubim is to be considered a specimen of the heavenly dignitaries that the Lord placed in Eden for the purpose of keeping that unhappy pair from being restored to their immortal state, we might suppose it altogether unnecessary to place a sword in their hands to be flourishing in every direction, as the bare sight of such unearthly monsters would be all sufficient to keep the *exiles of Eden* at a respectable distance. This Edenic legend of a tree of life being guarded by beings of that kind, is closely related in point of romance to the Greek mythic narrative of the dreadful Dragon that never slept in guarding the garden of Hesperides; which abounded in fruits of the most delicious kinds: and where also the nymphs kept watch over the golden apples that Juno gave to Jupiter on the day of their nuptials.

Dr. Kennicott on the "Tree of Life," inquires, "Why was this guard of angels placed at the extremity of the garden to secure the tree of life in the middle of it, when it might have been watched with more safety and convenience if the guard had been stationed close by the tree?" He further

remarks that it would be as endless as it is unnecessary to cite all the various opinions that have appeared on the subject of the tree of life; and in dividing the subject for discussion says, "First then, supposing in Paradise a tree of immortality, of which Adam was allowed to eat, we may reasonably suppose that Adam was acquainted with so *extraordinary* a tree; and, if so, that he made ready use of it, as the great security and privilege of his condition. But if Adam did eat of this immortalizing tree, how came he presently mortal?" Thus it is plain that if Adam was created immortal, he never could have died, whereas, if he was mortal by nature, he would have died without eating the fruit of either tree. And to infer that he was created immortal *conditionally*, according to the scriptural assumption, conflicts with those natural laws at the bar of which modern criticism finds it requisite to have such allegorical history arraigned.

Dr. Burnet, in his "Illustration of the Mosaic History," does not appear satisfied in regard to the vague account of the tree of life, and says, "We are told also of a *tree of life*, which we may reasonably think might be intended as a preservative against the decays of nature," etc; which conveys the idea, that in his opinion Adam was created subject to decay. As their eyes only became opened in consequence of eating the forbidden fruit, we are in a quandary to know whether they had no use of their optic organism up to this time, or whether they become opened on the same prin-

ciple that Jonathan's did, after eating honey, when food had been forbidden to be eaten by the king, (1 Sam. 14: 29). If they had no use of their eyes up to this time, and were so brutally stupid as to be unconscious of any difference between good and evil, how grateful mankind should feel toward the Serpent for the important information his revelation disclosed! The allegory however is not without some signification, for man is the only creature of God's creation that does eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

As the Jews under Mosaic economy and Aronic priesthood were the assumed chosen people of God, and Christ at the commencement of the Apostolic dispensation declared that they were of their father the Devil, it would be interesting to know at what period in their history the Lord turned them over to the Devil for his adoption. Having then renounced their old vice of idolatry, to which they were so incorrigibly addicted—particularly in the time of the Judges—when the Lord had them under his immediate care, the declaration of Christ leaves us with the conviction that the devil was the greatest reformer of the two. Paul seems to have considered him the most potent reclainer in the Christian church; as shown by his delivering Alexander and Hymeneus over to him for the purpose of being taught not to blaspheme, when he discovered that his preaching was not likely to produce any moral renovation in their character, (1 Tim. 1: 20). He further exhibits the moral utility

of a Devil in this letter to the Corinthians, concerning a man in their church whom he charges with fornication, for marrying his step-mother—as Dr. Hodge infers. When his admonition proved ineffectual in reclaiming him from his supposed polluted condition, the services of Satan were considered indispensable to work out his spiritual redemption through the destruction of the flesh, (1 Cor. 5: 5). But for some unaccountable reason, he does not seem to have performed to Paul's satisfaction, or has given offence through some other cause; for in writing to the Romans, (16: 20), he congratulates them on the anticipation that the God of peace would shortly bruise him under their feet. By such a contemptible expression in regard to him, he places no higher estimate on his qualities and usefulness than the poet Milton, when in his "Paradise Lost," he describes his fate by the use of such language as,—

"Him the almighty Power  
Hurled headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky,  
With hideous ruin and combustion down  
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell  
In adamantine chains and penal fire,  
Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms."

His severance from the adamantine chains, and escape from the bottomless perdition to which Milton has him consigned in a pre-Adamite age, and his presence and influence felt and acknowledged among the christian professors at Rome, forms a problem in his history that can only be adequately

solved by having recourse to the original account of his being more *subtle* than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.

Dante and Tasso had, prior to the famous English epic bard, graphically depicted this reputed monarch of hell. Dante, in exhausting his imagination by nine circles of torment, makes but little else of him than an atrocious monster locked up in the bowels of the earth; while Tasso, by giving him horns, has rendered him quite ridiculous.

This inveterate foe of the human race—which superstition finds everywhere and science nowhere, was anciently pictured in the Egyptian mythology as a huge monster panoplied with horns, shod with hoofs, and armed with a formidable tail, whose special dwelling place was in hell, where he kept up a perpetual fire in which to chain down and torment the souls of the unbelieving and disobedient. In the Christian mythology he is said to have been bound down there himself, reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day, for high treason against God in heaven. Thus by getting the different systems of faith confounded, the history of the Devil is rendered quite romantic as well as ludicrous to those who never saw the propriety of inventing a scare-crow of that kind.

The doctrine that such an infernal character exists, originated in the dark and remote shades of ancient Paganism, and had its peculiar adaptation to an ignorant and delusory period of the world,



when worthy reformers considered a deception of that kind, in connection with an offended God, the most prudent contrivance that could be adopted to instil into the minds of an illiterate populace, to deter them from indulging in vice and crime. It thence became incorporated into the Christian doctrinal tenets of belief by the apostles and their successors, in which discipline it still continues unimpaired, because of having become a prerequisite and all essential dogma of faith, without which the present theological system could not exist. The retention of this belief in the reality of a Devil among progressive people, seems to convey the idea that they continue to think there has been serious mismanagement in the original transactions of Deity in relation to his moral works, which has somehow prevented success in his purpose concerning the welfare of his creatures. Faith, then, is a powerful antagonist to God, and enemy to human happiness, who defeated God out of his good designs, and is continually exerting all his influence to ruin the souls of men, has become an indispensable tenet of belief in the Christian creed. The doctrine is also highly advantageous to believers, by furnishing them with an agency on whom they can gracefully foist their own misdeeds and short comings.

The great hindrance that he is supposed to be to the cause of religion, is expressed by Prof. Edwards, in his "Thoughts on the Revival of Religion," when he says, "The devil has driven the *pendulum* far beyond its proper point of rest; and when he

has carried it to the utmost length that he can, and it begins by its own weight to swing back, he probably will set in, and drive it with the utmost fury the other way; and so give us no rest;" etc. What a pity that good people should be kept in such a *restless* condition by the operations of a character that never had any existence outside of the human brain!

The lofty judicial position this fabulous personage holds in the Japanese mythology is shown by the following quotation from Prof. Goodrich's, "Descriptive History of all Religions." "In the same place stands likewise a pagod of that infernal judge, who is styled the king of devils. Two large devils are placed on each side of him, and as for himself, his figure is as monstrous and formidable as is suitable to his function, and his gloomy habitation. One of the devils acts as his secretary, and registers in a book kept for that particular purpose, all the offences and transgressions of mankind. The province of the other is to read them over distinctly, or rather to dictate what the secretary may enter." Thus the final judgeship and office of pronouncing eternal condemnation to offenders, which the Christian theology (or mythology) has assigned to Jesus—the lovely lamb of Calvary, is, in the Japanese mythology, much more appropriately executed by the king of devils!

This notorious character, who was anciently known as the Siva of India, the Ahriman of Persia, the Typhon of Egypt, and the Pluto of Greece, has,

under the Christian dispensation been styled God of this world, and honored with numerous dignified and high sounding titles and synonymous terms,—such as the Serpent, (an ancient emblem of wisdom), Lucifer, (son of the morning), Beelzebub, Abaddon, Apolyon, Satan, and the Diabolus of Bunyan's *Holy War*; with various forms from an Angel of light to that of a Dragon, is, according to Dr. Plumer, (Jehovah Jireh,\* p. 37), “proprietor of nothing, and bound with a chain.” Under such restricted circumstances no generous mind will envy him his Godship, nor the timorous be apprehensive of sustaining moral injury through his artifice, unless they heedlessly place themselves within the compass of his chain. It is a subject of interest though, to know at what period in his history he lost his property and was made to feel the use of a chain. For in the time of Christ, he was not only in enjoyment of full liberty, but was an extensive landed proprietor besides; as is shown by his taking Christ up into an exceeding high mountain, for the purpose of giving him some idea of his immense possessions, by an extended view,—to the whole of which, he, as God of this world held an indisputable title; and which Christ did not deny. Though unfortunately for the history, Palestine does not abound with an *exceeding* high mountain.

As we afterwards read of his going about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, the conclusion is, that in consequence of being disinherited of his property, he has in the interval either

become insane, or physiologically metamorphosed into a brute. In assuming the latter idea on account of his reputed devouring propensity, we infer that his destructive proclivity rendered it imperative for the public welfare to have him chained. The performance of this feat has brought his sphere of operation to such narrow limits, that we easily arrive at the conclusion that his services barely pay the expense of his keeping, in an economical and matter-of-fact age like the present. Though H. W. Beecher, on the "Second Incarnation" says that the Devil owns New York, yet in the same Discourse he afterward refutes his assertion by saying—"This whole globe is my Lord's." With the latter affirmation corroborated by the testimony of the Psalmist and Paul—who say "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof;" we are furnished with *scriptural* evidence that Plumer is correct in his estimate of the Devil's property, and that he is indeed proprietor of nothing; notwithstanding his friends claim for him the special jurisdiction of hell.

Dr. E. Beecher says, "Neither does prophecy give any hope of the conversion of the world till Satan is bound and cast into the abyss." As he is *already* bound, according to Plumer, we suggest that he be immediately sent to Rome, and "bruised under the feet of the brethren"—which Paul expected to have seen accomplished in his time, and an *abyss* then dug for him, and he cast in, so that the world may experience the benefit of conversion.

And when that crowning act in the confirmation of Christ's kingdom has been achieved, we would, in congratulation of the decisive victory in the cause of humanity, call attention to the novel idea of having the *chain* with which he is now bound, hung up as a relic of antiquity for the curiosity of future generations!

Dr. Cumming infers that the binding of Satan predicted by the Revelator John, in his Apocalyptic vision, is to be considered literal, and the one who binds him "none other than the Lord Jesus Christ." How comical then, according to that idea, will Christ appear coming in the *clouds of heaven*, with the key of the bottomless pit in one hand, and a chain in the other, (Rev. 20: 1, 2), to bind and lock up his old adversary, only to discover that the final act in the eternal triumph of his cause, has been gloriously achieved in advance of his time! But Cumming in his 9th *Lecture* on the "Great Consummation," says, "We know, too, that angels, and Satan their leader, have been suffering in chains and darkness, and torment ever since they fell; and that they will suffer for ever and ever." Here he has the same apostate Devil, that Christ, (the angel), according to his view is coming with a chain and key to bind and lock up, already bound and suffering in eternal chains and darkness.

Prof. Edwards, on the time from "Christ to Constantine," says, "Satan, the great red dragon, after so sore a conflict with Michael and his angels for the greater part of 300 years, was entirely routed

and vanquished; so that he was cast down, as it were from heaven to earth." Thus while Cumming has him securely bound and suffering in hell, Edwards had him engaged in a long fight with Michael and his angels in heaven.

Dr. Berg, on the *Millennium*, says, "The Millenarian theory as it is sometimes called by way of distinction, maintains that the second coming of Christ will precede the thousand years, during which the church of God shall enjoy a foretaste of heaven upon earth. According to this view, the Lord will destroy the wicked who are alive at his appearing, raise the bodies of the departed saints, and with them take up his abode in the New Jerusalem, where they shall live and reign with him a thousand years. At the expiration of that term, Satan will be loosed from the pit, gather together the hosts of the wicked and make a final assault on the terrestrial kingdom of Christ. In this conflict Satan will be utterly subdued." What a shocking idea to think of Christ reigning a thousand years with his saints in such felicity, and then the whole of them engaging in a "big fight" with the Devil, assisted by all the emissaries of hell and satellites of damnation!

Thus according to Edwards, a long and tedious battle between Satan and Michael took place in heaven fifteen hundred years ago, in which the former was routed; and according to Berg, another great conflict equally important and glorious in its results is yet to come off between him and Christ



at the close of the thousand years ; when, according to Cumming, Satan is, and will remain all this time bound and suffering in hell. As Christ and Michael are theologically considered the same person, it adds considerable to the romance of the history to think that Jesus should be commander in two such great battles, when, while on earth he was so non-combative. These two imaginary battles—one celestial and the other terrestrial, leaves us to wonder where Armageddon—the place where the battle of the great day of God Almighty takes place, is located. What a visionary idea to suppose that God *almighty* would tarnish his world wide celebrity for omnipotence, in attempting to prove it by stooping to combat with a reptile that he had previously sentenced to crawl on his stomach all the days of his life ! The adherents to the doctrine of a Devil and his office in the Christian system of theology, have got the theory of his career in antagonism to God confounded in such a ridiculous manner, that the whole contrivance might be consistently denominated a theological burlesque. And if it were not for the high opinion we entertain of its originators and their sincere expositors, we would rationally be constrained to term them all a corporation of respectable *mythologists*.

Lord Bishop Thompson, in his remarks on the necessity of a *divine* sacrifice to allay the wrath of God toward man for sin, presents us with what might be termed a laconic synopsis of the Chris-

tian theological idea of the Devil in relation to the operations of God, when he says, "The Devil cannot properly have either merit or power or right over man; that the power which he in one sense exerts against mankind was only permissive, and that it expired when the permission was withdrawn." He thus sets forth the absurd doctrine that a holy God became angry at man for what he in the plenitude of his wisdom gave the Devil permission to cause him to do, his prescience of course foreseeing the result. In quoting from Anselm he further adds, "If man sinned for pleasure, is it not consistent that he should make satisfaction by hardness? And if he were so easily overcome by the Devil, as to dishonor God by sin, is it not just that man, making satisfaction to God for sin, should conquer the Devil for the honor of God in the most difficult manner?"

With a constructive and merciful God, in opposition to a destructive and malicious Devil, the ex-cogitators of the Christian theology have invented a system of religious belief that was doubtless well adapted to the credulity of a fabulous and superstitious period of the world, when intolerance and romance were in the ascendant over truth and liberty, which is as seriously in conflict with the intelligence of an age fraught with toleration of religious sentiment and free inquiry after divine truth, as it is at variance with reason and humanity. But judging from the external sign it bears of internal decay, it will ere long become derelict in

consequence of the crumbling hovels of ancient imagination in which it originated, becoming gradually submerged in overwhelming cataclysm of human progress. And when biblical adherents discover that the *book* from which our theology and ideas of Divinity are derived, is valuable only when taken as a human production, but pernicious and inimical to Deity when declared to be *infallible and divine*, religion will be organized on a basis consistent with the principles of science and philosophy, reason and truth, virtue and humanity. Then it is expected the morning stars will again sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy.

In regard to the doctrine of devils or evil spirits, which formed a prominent feature in the ancient system of Pagan as well as Christian religion,—if we admit that there existed in those former times, spiritual entities termed *devils*—and that Christ cast seven out of one woman, the question naturally arises, what went with them when they were cast out? The supposed fact that they needed some abode after being ejected from their old habitations, is shown from the request of the legion who were in possession of the Gadarene maniac. But the swine found them so uncongenial to their feelings that the whole herd rushed precipitately into the sea of Galilee and perished in its waters. Whether the *poor devils* also found a watery grave, or what went with them, we are left to wonder. Where science and intelligence triumphs over superstition and ignorance, those obnoxious creatures—which

according to Josephus, (*Antiq. B. 8, C. 2, Whis. Trans.*) were in the time of Vespasian extracted from the possessed through the nostrils—do not abound. And when devils have become obsolete, the conclusion is that the “devilish” doctrine might with propriety be abandoned and consigned to the same fate.

On the ancient doctrine of devils or evil spirits, Dr. Lardner says, “Possession by evil spirits is a thing in itself absurd and impossible, at the least unreasonable and improbable, and not to be supposed, unless there be full and clear proof of it; which I think there is not. Man consists of soul and body; and it seems to be unsuitable to the wise methods of Providence, that other spirits should enter into any man without his consent, and actuate and govern him.” After quoting numerous scripture passages in defence of his argument, he further adds, “The Scriptures, therefore, in agreement with reason, and the general persuasion of mankind, supposes one soul or spirit in a man. And for other spirits to subsist therewith, and to control and actuate all his powers and members, is an incongruity that ought not to be admitted.” In treating the case of Mary Magdalene, on the ground that the Jews imputed various distempers to the influence of demons, he says, “It appears to me very evident that some natural, not moral distemper is thereby intended, and that by the seven demons is meant many, a certain number being given for an uncertain,” etc. In confirmation of his opinion

he adduces the testimony of Plotinus—an ancient Pagan sage, eminent for virtue, who speaks of diseases being ascribed by the people to demons which could be accounted for on natural principles.

The author of "Paul and Thecla," (10: 17, 18), says, "The unclean spirits were cast out, making a noise; all received their sick made whole, and glorified God who had bestowed such power on the virgin Thecla; inasmuch as the physicians of Seleucia were now of no more account, and lost all the profit of their trade;" etc. Whereby it appears that possession of such spirits were included in the category of diseases.

Calmet, in his *Bible Dictionary* says, "We commonly hold that devils are in hell, where they suffer the punishment of their rebellion. But the ancient Fathers placed the devils in the air; and St. Jerome says it was the common opinion of the Doctors in the church, that the air between heaven and earth is filled with evil spirits." That evil spirits have existed, do exist, and will continue to exist, is a belief established to a degree that admits of no controversy in a spiritually enlightened age: and the idea entertained by the primitive Fathers that they held their existence in space disconnected from material life, appears more consistent than the apostolic assumption that they occasionally took up their abode in bodies that belonged to other souls, and influenced the owners to their moral injury. The belief that they sometimes required a corpo-

real habitation, after having served out their existence in the flesh, and that there is a famous leader among them, universally known as *the Devil*, whose special office it is to corrupt and vitiate mankind, is apparently merely a pious notion induced by a supervacaneous system of religious instruction, borrowed from the religious proclivities of an age that is no criterion for the present, and which the present state of the world—owing to the facilities for more liberal education is fast outgrowing.

According to Paul, the Gentiles sacrificed to devils, and according to Moses, (Deut. 32 : 17), the Israelites did the same; whereby it appears that the ancient Jewish and Pagan conception of devils was altogether different from that of the primitive Christians, from whom the church derives its views. So much change does the human mind undergo in the course of religious development, that the intuitions of one age may be directly contrary to that of another. Some ancient nations, from whom the Israelites dissented, worshipped Deity under the name of Baalzebub, who in the apostolic dispensation was declared to be the prince of devils. The name of Deity in one age, being synonymous of Satan in another, shows what construction is to be placed on divine worship so far as the name is concerned.

Emmons, on "Necromancy and Fortune-Telling" says, "We are told by travelers that there is scarcely a village in Syria, in which there is not



some one, who has the credit of being able to cast out evil spirits." Thus in the East, where there has been but little or no progression since the apostolic days, those fanciful ideas in regard to people being morally and physically influenced by the possession of evil or unclean spirits, prevails almost to the extent that marked the era in which the present Christian doctrine originated.

Dr. Neander, in his "Life of Christ," when commenting on *Demoniacal Possessions*, at the close of the Mosaic dispensation, says, "The sway of Demonism was a sign of the approaching dissolution of the Old World. Its phenomena—symptoms of the universally felt discord—were amongst the signs of the times that pointed to the coming of the Redeemer, who was to change that discord into harmony." If the reign of Demonism then portended the close of the Old Dispensation, there appears no reason why such argument is not applicable in defence of the assumption that the present growth and prevalence of what orthodoxy terms *demonism*—otherwise called *Spiritualism*, indicates a dissolution of the apostolic Dispensation. If such be the case, it is to be desired that such a religious revolution may result in changing that discord into harmony, which he supposed Christ's first coming to have accomplished.

That departed spirits—good or evil, do sometimes visit the earth, or continue in proximity thereto, is a belief that defies gainsaying; and if Martin Luther could have communicated with the

one that haunted his apartments, he would doubtless have discovered that it was no such *devil* as he through superstitious predilection religiously presupposed, but merely some harmless devil or spirit who was having some enjoyment to himself at the indomitable reformer's expense. But like Luther, orthodoxy have, through early training and educational bias, become so prepossessed with *devil on the brain*, that it is doubtful whether the Christian system of religion will become relieved of that obnoxious incubus till such myths as that of an *angry* God, hell fire, eternal damnation, or a bloody atonement through vicarious sacrifice, together with all such like relics of a primitive age are laid away on the shelf in memory of past services. When that is accomplished, our present system of theology will dissolve, while there will still remain useful material in the Bible sufficient to form a volume transcending in merit the "Beauties of Shakspeare."

The term *devil* is derived from a contraction of the words *do evil*, in the same manner that the appellation of *God* is obtained by abbreviating the word *good*. And it is manifest to every reformer, that *evil* or *do evil* must be confronted on progressive and philosophical principles, in congruity with the religious feeling of the age, without the use of a fabled character who is supposed to have done his full share toward elevating the human family, when he taught the first couple how to attain sufficient knowledge to discern between good and evil.

Thus by omitting a letter from *good*, we have *God*, and by prefixing one to *evil*, or dismissing one from *do evil*, we are furnished with a Devil, and when mankind become sufficiently advanced in divine erudition to comprehend what really constitutes *God*, and realize the utter futility of such a being in his works as a *devil*, acting in opposition to his will, that feigned adversary of the human race, who has so long been going about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, will give his last "roar," and be laid away to an eternal repose in the same grave with his vicegerent Sectarian Fanaticism, amid the prolonged exultations of the enlightened sons and daughters of humanity.

END OF PART SECOND.

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